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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 19 May 2010

Mercredi 19 mai 2010

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 19 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 19 mai 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes, the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 20, 2010, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That at 5 p.m. on that day, those filed amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, May 31, 2010. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, on the day the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

M^me^ France Gélinas: I cannot—

Interjection.

M^me^ France Gélinas: I don't think I have to say that I share my time, but if I do, consider it done.

I cannot tell you how disappointed I am with the motion that has just been put forward. Bill 21 is the worst bill I have ever seen since I've been an MPP. I don't know who drafted this. I don't know who advised you of this, but this is terrible and horrible. We, the NDP, have submitted 92 amendments, 92 amendments that would give us the opportunity to go from this terrible bill, where all the cards are stacked for an industry dominated to make money hand over fist, and nothing is there to protect the patient, the resident, the tenants—those who will live in the retirement homes in Ontario.

We have brought forward amendments. We are stating our case and, to their credit, the majority government has adopted some of the amendments that we are working through. But in order for the dozens and dozens of amendments that we haven't gone through yet to be understood and voted upon in a democratic fashion, you have to give us time to stake our claim. To say that, no matter where we're at, it doesn't matter if there are 60 amendments left, they will all be considered rejected without even having listened to them—how is that democracy? Then, when we go to third reading—third reading of a bill that is so important, and yet, right now, so terrible—we will have all of 20 minutes. That's it; that's all.

I have been waiting for a law to govern and legislate retirement homes for a long time. At the beginning of 2000-01, we in the field of health care were seeing what was happening in the retirement home business, and we wanted legislation. We saw the terrible stories unfold where people died of starvation, where people burned to death in their beds because there was no regulation, and we wanted that to change.

Finally, the government listened, and in 2007, they did a consultation. Alleluia: They had seen the light of day; they realized that this industry had to be regulated. So they did the consultation. I was happy at the time. So, 2007 finished; 2008 went by; 2009 went by. I brought this question forward: When are you going to bring about legislation for retirement homes? I asked this question in the House multiple times. Every time I was told: "It's coming, and you will be happy when it comes."

Finally, in the spring of 2010, it came. Bill 21 came. I guess I should be happy legislation had been put forward, but by the time I had read through this legislation, I was

appalled. I cannot believe that in this day and age in Ontario we would put a piece of legislation forward like this that is deliberately set out to have two parallel systems of long-term care.

0910

One is the system of long-term-care homes, with nursing homes and homes for the aged that we know, where the government takes the responsibility and provides the care to vulnerable residents of long-term-care homes, with a series of 300 pieces of legislation specifically targeted to quality of care, because we realize that the people who live in our long-term-care homes are vulnerable and they need protection.

We now have, with Bill 21, the set-up of a parallel system of for-profit long-term-care homes where the residents, the tenants of those homes, will have no protection whatsoever. Things as simple as saying a health care professional should sign your plan of care—this amendment was turned down. Things as simple as informed consent, that you should require informed consent, and people should know when to require it and what this means—this amendment was also turned down. Things as simple as, if you have to provide your resident with some information, you cannot charge the resident a fee for that information—that was also turned down.

I cannot tell you the disaster that is waiting for us in the retirement home industry in Ontario. I thought it was bad before, but that is nothing compared to what this piece of legislation will do. This is why we are bringing forward amendments. This is why we need the time to explain those amendments to the people in government: so that they wake up to the reality of what they're about to do.

They are about to set a parallel fee-for-service—if you have the money to pay, there is no cap on the amount of care you can buy in a retirement home. If they have the money to pay, they can purchase unregulated, uncensored, unlegislated care for a fee. We all know where that will lead.

When we went through the Long-Term Care Act, all of the impetus, the energy, the effort that was poured into that act was specifically to recognize that those people are fragile; they're frail; they deserve our protection. Now, we will have the exact same level-of-care recipient in a for-profit retirement home that can offer any level of care they want with no regulation whatsoever. If you're willing to pay, they will provide it, no questions asked.

With this piece of legislation, I can foresee many long-term-care homes that would say they are burdened by the quality legislation that we have put on long-term-care homes switch their licence: "To heck with being a long-term-care home. I can do the exact same thing to the exact same resident in the exact same premises and not have to account for my actions and care to anybody but my shareholders"—whose primary motive is going to be money, not quality of care. This is one of the things that will happen.

The second thing that will happen is what is already happening here: People who depend on the retirement home operator for their care will be taken advantage of in every way you can fathom. They will be taken advantage of monetarily, physically, emotionally—you name it. The Liberal government has set up the perfect storm.

When the government brings a piece of legislation in health care that is good, I have no problem supporting it. I have done it in the past. When they do good things, I'm on record, I support what they do, I vote for it, and I speak openly of it. Sometimes my caucus doesn't like it, because I give kudos to the Liberals, but when they do a good job I have no problem saying that they're doing a good job. But when they bring forward a terrible piece of legislation, it is my duty to speak out against it.

Not only are they bringing forward a horrible and terrible piece of legislation that will put thousands of vulnerable seniors at risk in Ontario, they are pushing it through with the privilege of a majority to have 20 minutes for third reading. To me, this is an affront to democracy—to not even allow us to present the amendments we want because it will be time-allocated.

Just so that people understand, what this motion is for—the NDP caucus has brought forward many, many amendments to Bill 21 because we think that it is a terrible bill. What the Liberals are doing right now is saying, "You've talked enough. We don't want to hear from you anymore. Just present your amendments. We will take it for granted that we will turn them all down, no matter what's in them. You won't have a chance to present them. You won't have a chance to read them for the record. You won't have a chance to defend them or bring your arguments as to why you want them. We will vote them down." How could that be? Ontario has a democracy, don't we? How can it be that they do things like this?

A lot of people within the health care system have asked for those amendments to be brought forward, and nobody will ever hear about them. Nobody will ever know them. They will never be on the record anywhere because the Liberals have decided that they will be deemed rejected. Their amendments will be deemed approved, but the amendments from the opposition, the people who are there to hold the government to account, all of our amendments will be deemed rejected, without being heard, without being on the record, without being explained, without being debated—this, in Ontario, in 2010, in a democracy. That doesn't seem like a democracy to me.

But the motion goes even further. Not only will you not have a chance to hear those amendments—they are going to be voted down as if they had never existed—when it comes time for third reading, we will have all of 20 minutes for third reading. Twenty minutes is not a whole lot of time.

We are dealing, in the retirement home business, with a potentially very vulnerable group. I agree that not everybody who lives in a retirement home is vulnerable. There are a lot of vibrant seniors out there who can defend their rights, who can make informed choices and who don't need our protection. For those people, things

will be good, but things are already good for those people. They don't need the law. The people who do need the law are the critical mass of vulnerable people—people who are losing their autonomy, people who are becoming frailer, people who will be the ones purchasing care from retirement homes. Those are the vulnerable people.

I've asked the government many times, "Tell me where in the continuum of care do you see the retirement home business fitting?" In my mind, I see that you should at first try to support people in their own homes, so we would have a strong and robust home care system that would give people the support they need to live in their own homes with respect, dignity and security. As they age, they may have to move into supportive housing, where there's a little bit more of a formal set-up for care, there's supervision 24/7, and there is on-site access to care. Then, in my mind, people would move into retirement homes. Here again, the retirement home is a home where care would be a part, and the bill says that. You would need at least two elements of care to be designated as a retirement home, and then, as people's needs increase, you would go into a long-term-care home. If that continues, you would go into complex continuing care. In my mind, that is the continuum of care. As people age and become frail, their needs increase. Not everybody who gets older gets frail and has needs, but a lot of them do, so we should have a good continuum of care for those people. There is none of this in the bill—none of it.

0920

The retirement home is not a piece of the continuum of care for long-term care—not at all. The retirement home bill, Bill 21, sets up a parallel, for-profit long-term-care system. There are no caps on the type of care that you do. You will have people in retirement homes in Ontario who are frailer than what you find in complex continuing care in our hospitals. The way this bill is set up, there will be people with equal needs who will be in our retirement home system. This is completely absurd. We've waited a long time for this piece of legislation. I have never been that disappointed in the actions of our government. They really, really are doing something terrible and awful. I can't believe this is happening. It is happening under my watch, and now my watch is being cut short thanks to the motion of Ms. Smith. I can't stand this.

I stand here before you and say all this when I know that their minds are made up. Their minds are made up on all kinds of levels. They have their minds made up that they want to push this bill through no matter what the opposition has to say, no matter what the people of Ontario have to say and no matter what the needs of the residents in residential care are.

Mr. Paul Miller: And they don't even pay attention.

M^me^ France Gélinas: This is hard to believe.

We have this potentially vulnerable group that will live in the retirement homes of Ontario. They will be out of sight. They will be sheltered from public scrutiny. Unless you walk into one of those homes, you won't know what's going on in there. We've never said that all tenants are vulnerable, but a critical mass of them are going to be. There is nothing in this bill that guarantees the quality of the care that the retirement homes will have to provide. There is very little oversight of those retirement homes, and it is now written in law that you don't have to provide any oversight of those retirement homes.

I cannot support Bill 21. People who care for the elderly, the frail and the vulnerable of this province cannot support Bill 21. It is a danger to anybody who cares about people in need of protection.

What Bill 21 will do is create a third party regulatory model, what we call self-regulation. Well, self-regulation, the way it is written in this bill, is set up to be dominated by the industry. You have mainly for-profit—there are a few not-for-profit retirement homes out there, I must say, but the majority of the industry in Ontario is made up of for-profit retirement homes. Those will be the people who will self-regulate themselves. And whenever we ask to put elements of quality of care into those regulations, the government says, "We are hands-off. It's going to be this third party authority that will self-regulate." How incredible is this? An industry that, by its definition, has shareholders there to make a profit will self-regulate, and the government says, "We don't want to impose any quality-of-care requirements because we want this to be arm's-length. We want a for-profit industry to regulate itself, to decide what they will do in retirement homes in Ontario."

Can anybody else but me see that this is a parallel to the fox guarding the henhouse? Would that be a good model of care? I see somebody who knows quite a bit about raising chickens. She and her husband have been chicken farmers for many years. Has she ever hired a fox to look after her chickens? I don't think so. Nobody would do that. Well, we are setting up a bill, Bill 21, where we will have people motivated by making a profit looking after the quality of care the residents should receive. This is incomprehensible. This is unacceptable. This bill has to change.

In normal practice, how do you change? You hold hearings, which we did. We voted in favour of second reading because we wanted this bill to go to committee, we wanted the government to hear the outrage out there, and they did. The health care providers came out in droves and told the government that this bill was completely insane, that it had to be changed, that it would put people at risk, and the list goes on and on. Ask any health care providers association in Ontario. They have all weighed in on this bill and told the government to change it. That's the regular process in Ontario.

When a bill goes to second reading, it goes to committee, people listen, we learn from the knowledge that exists out there in the field, and then we make changes. Well, we are in the process of making those changes. We are in the process of what we call clause-by-clause, where we take this bill, which is quite thick, and we go through it clause by clause and say, "Do you realize that

the way this is written right now, it will mean this out in the field? Why don't we change this and put in that language instead?" So, in going through clause-by-clause, we have brought forward close to 100 amendments to make this bill stronger.

We were going through this at, I would say, a normal speed. Nobody has been really holding up the process, except the Liberals had a request at the very beginning—they were not quite ready, and they requested a half-hour recess. Everybody was okay with that: "If they need a little bit more time, we will give them a little bit more time. We're all in this together. We want to make the best laws we can for the people of Ontario." Then we started our work and were going through.

Now, about halfway through, we are told that this democratic process is not going to take place anymore. Ms. Smith stands up, puts out a motion and says, "We don't care what you have in your amendments. We've already decided that we're going to vote 'no' for all of them and we're going to vote 'yes' for all of our amendments"—the Liberals' amendments being very few, by the way.

They don't care about the democratic process. When they wanted half an hour to get ready, the opposition said yes. We wanted to work collaboratively, we wanted to be positive in this process which we know is very important. But then, halfway through, the government decided, "We're not going to listen to you anymore. We don't care about your amendments. Bring forward whatever you want, but you won't have a chance to put it into the record. You won't have a chance to state your arguments. You won't have a chance for debate. Take it for granted that we're voting no to all of them." I don't like that. I have something to say. The people of Ontario want to be heard. Lots of people put in lots of work to try to make this a better bill. Lots of people in Ontario waited a very long time for this piece of legislation to be brought forward, and now that it has finally been brought forward and the democratic process is in action and we want some changes, we are being told, "You can't. Starting at 5 o'clock on Thursday, who cares what you have to say? We will vote on those amendments, and take it for granted that yours will all be voted 'no.'" This is not democracy. The people of Ontario deserve better than this. Don't we deserve better than that on this piece of legislation? We've been asking for this for 10 years. What would a couple of more hours do?

0930

They've had lots of chances. The consultation was finished in 2007. It took three years. It took them three years from the end of consultations to bring forward the bill. It's not like we didn't push them, not like we didn't ask for this bill to be brought forward. I asked the question repeatedly in the House, "When are you going to regulate retirement homes?"

Now that we are finally in this process that the people of Ontario have asked for, have watched and want to be heard in, we get this motion this morning that says, "Nobody wants to hear from you. We don't care what you have to say. We will take all of your motions, whatever they are, and vote no."

I'm very disappointed. I have waited a long time. I'm worried about what this bill will do. To me, some of the most important amendments that we're making to the bill—amendments that, with the proper arguments, I hope I will be able to convince the people on the Liberal side to support—are yet to come, amendments regarding the detention of tenants in their own units, something that is illegal in Ontario. I want to explain to them why I don't want this in the bill. They are yet to come. But nobody will ever hear those arguments. They will never be read into the record. Nobody will know. It's as if they don't care. They don't care about a critical mass of vulnerable people for whom the people of Ontario have asked that the government step in and bring regulation.

I wanted to give a couple of examples of what happens when an industry like this is left unregulated. Why do we need good, strong legislation regarding retirement homes? Let me give you an example. The example involves the case of Janet Longford, who was a private operator of a home. She had a 16-bed home, located in Orillia. In 2006, she pleaded guilty to failing to provide the necessities of life because she severely neglected Sarah Eisemann, one of her residents. A Superior Court judge sentenced her to six months of house arrest and three years' probation after hearing—if there are people who are squeamish out there, turn your TV off; you're not going to like what's coming—that she starved them; malnutrition. Mrs. Eisemann was covered with bedsores—anybody in health care? Stage four bedsores are not a pretty sight—and was restrained.

What happens when the industry is not regulated? The owners of the homes do whatever they want. If one of their tenants is a little bit hard to handle, they restrain them. If they still won't listen, they starve them. And if they still won't listen, they won't provide them basic care, like wound care when somebody has bedsores.

Am I making this up? I'm not making this up. Go to the Superior Court of Justice of Orillia and read the whole transcript of what went on. This went on here in Ontario, and this is why we need legislation that protects vulnerable people.

But the Liberal government has completely refused to put any quality-of-care element into Bill 21. What we have is a self-regulated industry where the authority to make bylaws and to decide on quality-of-care issues will be made by the fox in the henhouse. It will be made by the profit-driven industry operator. I can't understand why we are doing this. I can't understand why; I can't understand what good will come of it. To me, we are failing the people of Ontario.

This self-regulation regime, to me, is like a fear of government regulation. There is a role for government in a democracy to protect the most vulnerable within our midst. That's why we've asked for the regulation of retirement homes, so there are no more Janet Longfords who restrain, who starve, who deny basic care to their residents. But there is nothing in this bill that would keep many, many other Janet Longfords from starving, from

restraining and from failing to provide basic care to their residents. There is absolutely nothing in this bill that will do this. How come we don't learn from our mistakes? How come we don't learn from what has motivated the people of Ontario to ask for legislation?

I wanted to go more into the details of the bill, but my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is our critic for seniors, and he too wants to talk about some of the horrific issues happening in retirement homes as we speak, and that this bill, the way it is constructed, will completely ignore. We will give the people of Ontario the false pretense that since we now have legislation, the retirement home system is now regulated. Doesn't that sound good? If I know nothing about long-term care and my grandmother needs a place to stay, I go and see a retirement home that is legislated by the government of Ontario. Now, doesn't that give it—you know, it must be good. The government says it's good; it has given it a licence. Yes, except that the licence is not based on quality-of-care issues; it's based on making sure those industries make a profit.

I have to sit down, but my colleague will take on the fight.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I'm pleased to make comments on Bill 21.

The retirement industry in Ontario has been waiting a very long time to be regulated. They've invited regulation, and Bill 21 is the result of that. Right now, we have two organizations, a non-profit organization and a for-profit organization—both voluntary—and their members are not regulated, but by moral suasion have to meet certain standards in Ontario. Unfortunately, there are a fair number of retirement homes that choose not to join the voluntary groups, and they are in no way regulated by either the government or their peers.

As I say, this bill is supposed to bring all retirement homes into the fold for the first time and regulate them for the betterment of seniors. That's what we're talking about. This will be a growth industry in the future. Demographics say we're basically going to double the number of seniors within a decade, and many of them will have needs that cannot be met in the home. There's no doubt about it: The preferable place for a senior is in their own home, and God bless them, many live as a couple or alone and, with a lot of assistance, are able to stay in their home. That is a wonderful thing.

0940

Unfortunately, there are some that have higher needs and can no longer be cared for in their own home. Traditionally, they have first gone to the hospital if they were ill, and then they would be placed in a long-term-care facility. There are approximately 73,000 long-term-care facilities in Ontario. There are only 40,000 retirement homes. This government, unfortunately, in my opinion, has failed to realize that our seniors are going to double in the next decade, and they have basically put a freeze on new retirement homes. They have made an attempt to refurbish older units and bring them up to date, and that's an admirable cause. However, as far as new retirement and long-term-care beds, there seems to be some doubt; if you look at one website of the government, it says so many beds, and if you look at another, it has a different number. But basically, in my investigation of that field I feel that there are few or no new retirement homes either being built or planned by this government.

They cannot ignore the problem of the doubling of seniors during the next 10 years, so what is their plan? I believe that their plan is to emphasize retirement homes rather than long-term-care facilities. They say no. What they say is, "Retirement homes are going to be low-care facilities and long-term-care facilities are going to be higher-need facilities; that's the distinction." They say that, but they do nothing about it. There is nothing in Bill 21 that puts a limit on the needs of individuals going into retirement homes, individuals who, in my opinion, should be in long-term-care facilities, but they're not going into long-term-care facilities.

Long-term-care facilities—again, the figures are in some doubt—are subsidized by the government per bed to the tune of not less than $40,000 per annum to as high as $55,000 per annum. Retirement homes, on the other hand, are not subsidized in any way directly. However, there are some non-profit retirement homes in the group of retirement homes. For each retirement home which is occupied by a person who should be in long-term care, there's a great saving to the taxpayer and to this government.

Why don't they just go into long-term-care facilities if they have that higher need? Well, if you're not building any new ones and the population is increasing, there are no beds. In my city of Cambridge, we have over 35 individuals, seniors, who were ill; everything that could be done for them has been done, and they're ready to be moved into long-term-care facilities because they have higher needs. There are no beds available in Cambridge, or anywhere else in our region, as I understand it. So these individuals now have their home—forget about cost for a minute. We've taken these seniors and forced them to have their hospital as their home. A person goes to a hospital because they are ill or in the case of the joyous event of the birth of a child. They don't go to a hospital to live there as their home. That's probably the worst thing we can do to an individual, especially an individual who is fully aware of the situation and has all their faculties. Yet, day after day, month after month, these individuals call Cambridge Memorial Hospital their home.

It's not right. I don't think I'll get any argument from anyone. It's just not right. But that's what happens when we put a cap on or freeze new long-term-care beds.

What this government hopes is that the needs of individuals who can no longer remain in their homes and are seniors will be fulfilled by retirement homes. That's why there's no cap on the needs. In other words, they can take any patient in a retirement home, which is privately run or run by municipalities—they can take any patient, no matter how high their needs are; there's no restriction.

If there was, then they would need to move into a long-term-care facility or a hospital.

But there is no restriction, and when questioned as to why there's no restriction, if this is an intermediate step to long-term care, there's really no answer forthcoming.

Does that mean that this bill does not recognize high needs? No. It not only does not put a limit on it, it does not recognize the fact that there are individuals who will come into a retirement home only because there's no other place to go in this province—absolutely no other place because there are no extra beds.

We have approximately 73,000 long-term-care beds in this province, and they are all full. We have only 40,000 retirement homes in this province, and they are not all full at this moment because one is subsidized by the government and one you have to pay the full shot, and the fees are, obviously, therefore high. You have to pay for each additional personal service you might require.

I predict that, over the next 10 years, the retirement industry is going to grow enormously. Retirement homes as a segment of our community are going to easily double from 40,000 to 80,000 beds over the next 10 years, and probably greater, because one thing we discovered in questioning as we were going through clause-by-clause—that's why clause-by-clause of a bill is really important.

This bill has over 100 sections. Each section has a meaning, and it's either good, it's bad or it's indifferent, but it's an opportunity to study each section, to ask questions about it, though I must admit for the first time since I have been in the Legislature, 14 years, I didn't get answers to all the questions I had—it was ignored; it was just take it or leave it, and you didn't get your questions answered, because the questions are really important at times.

For instance, there's no limit on this retirement home. There's no limit on the needs of the individual. So it simply means that—well, let me just go back. Retirement homes are now going to be governed by self-regulation. Self-regulation has been used by a former government and this government in professions all the time. For instance, the law society is self-regulation. It governs lawyers. The college of physicians is self-regulation, and that has spread to nurses now and teachers. It's a good way of governing. It saves the government money and, therefore, your taxes can be lower because we're asking these professions to regulate themselves at their own cost.

This is not a profession—retirement homes. These are businesses. It's a little different. We don't say to General Motors, "You regulate yourself when it comes to safety." We say to General Motors, Chrysler and the auto industry, which are businesses, "We're not asking you to regulate yourself. We're going to tell you what the minimum standards are that we want for the protection of the consumer."

Not in this case. Here we have a group of businesses who are going to regulate themselves, and when we proposed an amendment that said, "Look, these are not professions. These are businesses. Let's ensure that a majority of the directors on the board who govern this authority are in fact representatives of the public and not the industry," this government said no. They didn't really give a reason; they just said no. There is no reason. This is not a profession. This is a group of businesses, God bless them. They are totally in control of carrying on their businesses and regulating their own industry.

0950

That leads to a couple of problems. Because we have no limit on the level of care and they're regulating their own business, one of the first things they're going to do is introduce "restraint." That's a simple word. It's innocuous; it doesn't mean a lot. But retirement homes are now going to have the right to restrain a senior. Oh, yes, there are a whole bunch of words in there that are supposed to protect seniors, but the fact is that these residents—because they're no longer tenants. This bill takes all of these retirement people who are living there, who have been tenants with certain tenant rights, and all of a sudden changes the name. We said, "Why are you changing the name?" "Oh, they're going to stay the same. They're still tenants." "Well, why don't we call them tenants? That's what they are." "No, we're going to call them residents from now on." We couldn't figure it out until later on, and you say "Wow." All of a sudden, tenants—some of us live in condos in Toronto. I'm a tenant—and my landlord can come into my premises and restrain me by mechanical means or by drugs? We've introduced a new concept into the bill of rights in Ontario and Canada, that tenants can now be, physically or by drugs, restrained—for their own good, of course. Who determines this "for their own good"? The industry. We're right back where we started. It's like a Catch-22.

How about confinement? Can we confine tenants? Can my landlord come into my room and say, "You're not going to live here anymore. We're going to find a place," or, "We're putting big locks on your doors and you won't be able to come out until we tell you to come out"? That's actually happening in Ontario right now, because it's contained in this bill: that individuals who are tenants and are paying for their upkeep and their services are subject to being restrained, to being confined. I never thought I would see that in Ontario without a judge's order or an independent third person such as a minister, who could protect the public and is subject to public review. But no, this is going to happen somewhere by self-governing, and that's not the place. When you're coming to restriction of freedom, whether it's for their good or not, the place to regulate that is in the public purview, not in a private self-regulation scheme. Those are restrictions on one's freedom, and they have no place in this bill, in my opinion.

As I say, if you are looking to make money in the next few years, I can only suggest that you look closely at the retirement home industry, because it is about to explode. That assumes that I am correct that this government will continue to restrict or freeze the number of new beds given to long-term-care facilities. The last time long-term-care beds were frozen was also a Liberal government, if I recall. I think it was Premier Peterson who

decided to freeze long-term-care beds in order to save money and—

Mr. Vic Dhillon: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The bill that we're discussing is about retirement homes. It's got nothing to do with long-term-care homes or what the member is talking about.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Well, I'll listen carefully and make sure the speaker adheres to the rules.

The member for Cambridge.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: The parliamentary assistant tried to cut off debate in committee in the same manner: by arguing relevance. He should know that he's not in a courtroom, that we are here to exercise our constitutional right to speak the truth, our constitutional right to represent our constituents, and we are not going to be subject to censorship. It's one of the few times that censorship has raised its ugly head in committee in my 14 years, but it happened in this bill, and I'm really disappointed that it did happen.

This bill puts us on the slippery slope to privatized health care. The regulating of retirement homes tells me that this government has no plan to invest in new long-term-care facilities and is abandoning the needs of our seniors.

To quote a press release posted to this government's website two months ago, "Ontario is rebuilding 4,183 existing beds and updating facilities at 37 long-term-care homes." These are not new beds; these are existing beds. You are insulting the seniors of this province by implying that you are looking out for their future needs.

Many seniors in Ontario cannot afford to live in privately owned retirement homes. Rooms at retirement homes cost between $1,500 and $5,000 a month, and are not subsidized by government funding. According to the report "Boomer Tsunami" by Judy Steed, it costs $43,000 per year per person for a place in a long-term-care facility. The regulation of retirement homes creates a new class of lesser personal care. Seniors in this province will be forced from hospital to retirement homes because there are no long-term-care beds available. This government has frozen the construction of long-term-care facilities, and my fear is that seniors will be moved from hospitals to retirement homes, where the level of care they require may not be available. That is already happening in my jurisdiction. I recently visited a retirement home that just opened, and there were three new residents and all of them were coming directly from the hospital.

While I agree that retirement homes require some regulation, this is not what today's seniors need. They need new long-term-care facilities, not more government red tape. Regulating retirement homes might be a good idea, but it totally ignores the real problem, and it's a cheap way of getting patients out of hospitals. This creates a dangerous situation and puts the safety and well-being of seniors at risk.

As a senior, your dream of a safe and comfortable home when you need extra personal care is gone under this government. This government is saving money at the expense of some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

The proposed bill confirms this government has no plan to build additional long-term-care facilities in our province. This government has abandoned the seniors in Ontario.

1000

I received an email from the president of the residents' council at a retirement residence in Kanata. He writes:

"The proposed legislation would have considerable impact on both our lifestyles and finances, yet it seems almost impossible to obtain knowledge of even its basic content, scope and intent. Do your officials not realize that there are many hundreds of residents of retirement residences throughout the province of Ontario who have enjoyed a fine lifestyle of their own choosing for many years, satisfied that their residences are well managed and self-regulated by the membership in the Ontario Retirement Communities Association, their own residents' council and excellent management teams employed by their administrations? Also, that if dissatisfied, they are free to leave on appropriate notice and seek residence in a wide variety of well-appointed and managed for-profit residences. It would also seem that by ignoring the vast area of knowledge and expertise, your officials are missing a great resource in formulating any required legislation."

The reason that particular quotation is important is because it assumes something, and the writer assumes something: that people can afford to go into retirement homes. They're not subsidized, like long-term-care facilities. Where are we going to put our seniors who have no large pension, for instance? Some 70% of the residents of this province, as I understand it, have no private pension plan. They are totally reliant on Canada pension and old age security and, of course, what savings they may have accumulated. How are they going to afford to pay $43,000, $45,000 a year? After paying income tax, that means they would have to have an income of $60,000, give or take—possibly higher. How are they going to afford to go to a retirement home? I don't see how they can. There will be so many who cannot. They can't stay at home, because their needs are too great, and they can't go to a long-term-care facility. About the only place they're going to end up is in the hospital again, and we're right back where we started, where we're condemning our seniors to live in a hospital as their home.

My colleague Elizabeth Witmer called on this government to develop a plan for long-term care after many of us were approached by nursing homes desperate for increased funding for front-line care. You recall that a little while ago it was determined that the allowances for meals at our prisons in Ontario were higher than the money provided for long-term-care facilities. As a matter of fact, the government did listen in this case—and provided a pittance. But they had to recognize that there was something wrong with the logic of paying more for meals in prisons than there was for our seniors in long-term-care facilities. It was a strange situation, to say the least.

Witmer launched a petition proposing a six-point plan to improve nursing home care. The plan called for:

—a sector-wide staffing increase of 45,000 full-time positions within a year;

—expedite the redevelopment of Ontario's 35,000 oldest long-term-care beds. As I mentioned, the government has in fact started, in a small step, to renovate certain beds;

—achieve an average of three worked hours of personal care per day within a year;

—simplify the regulations which govern nursing homes;

—produce a comprehensive plan with benchmarks to reduce long-term-care wait-lists of more than 25,000 people. I think it's substantially higher than that now, and it will continue to increase; and

—address inflationary pressures by adequately funding the increased operating costs of long-term-care homes.

The plan fell on deaf ears. Instead, we have Dalton McGuinty's record on long-term-care facilities, which is dismal.

Allow me to share some facts. Long-term-care residents receive far less personal care than long-term-care residents in Alberta, Manitoba and New Brunswick. These points are similarly applicable to retirement homes, of course, simply because we're talking about the care, with government help, at a certain level in long-term-care facilities that is surely higher than that in many retirement homes.

Ontario's nursing home residents receive 2.6 worked hours of personal care per day. This number is much lower than the three-plus worked hours provided by the three other provinces, and those are Alberta, Manitoba and New Brunswick. This gap in care is steadily increasing due to a shortage of staff.

Long-term-care homes are short-staffed since they do not have the resources to hire enough front-line staff to provide the level of personal care that residents require. As a result, Ontario's dedicated long-term-care staff is overworked. The lack of staff means that Ontario will continue to lag behind other provinces in the amount of personal care they provide to nursing home residents.

Some 35,000 seniors live in nursing homes which do not meet more home-like design—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Cambridge, I'm sure you're going to relate that information to retirement homes.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Yes. Thank you, Speaker. As you point out, when we're talking about our long-term-care facilities, the level of care, one would assume, would be the same and no greater in retirement homes. That's my analogy. I'm trying to work on it, Speaker, but if I stray, please bring me back to the point of this bill.

Some 35,000 seniors live in nursing homes which do not meet home-like design standards. To be fair, that's only 35,000 seniors out of approximately 73,000 who actually reside, so it's less than half. Unless Dalton McGuinty initiates a promised capital renewal plan for these below-standard spaces, seniors will continue to live in three- and four-bed wards without the dignity of an ensuite bathroom or wheelchair accessibility.

As I did mention, there were some small steps taken to attempt to remedy the matter, but all the resources are going into renovations and none into new beds, and it doesn't help those individuals who usually in this province, I guess, are seniors. We equate them with over 65, I hope, though I must admit that the movies define seniors as over 55. I think the seniors' level should be higher. I think that 65 is the old standard for seniors, and I would think that 75—in so many cases, I've met so many individuals who are still playing golf at 85. That did not happen too many years ago.

There are more than 400 regulations which govern nursing homes. There are going to be a lot more that govern retirement homes, it looks like, because the bill itself has over 100 sections, and that's even before we start with the regulations. Those regulations, I fear, are going to be massive; it's the only way to describe it. I don't know how anybody is going to make true sense of them.

Dedicated front-line health workers are preoccupied with measuring the amount of coffee in long-term-care residents' cups or labelling toothbrushes instead of delivering quality personal care to residents.

1010

As I said at the beginning, retirement homes are going to be the growth industry. As a matter of fact, one of the interesting points that came out: My theory, which remains to be proven—and we will find out over the next few years, a very few short years, whether my theory is correct—is that this whole regulation scheme is merely an attempt to save money and privatize health care by moving people from long-term-care beds over to retirement beds which the government does not subsidize. But it could even be worse. Right now, we have 73,000 long-term-care beds. One of the questions—I forget who asked it—the other day in committee: We were talking about a mixed building—let's take a high-rise of 10 storeys, and one whole floor was a retirement home, that whole floor, and the rest were long-term-care beds. The question was, what is it? I mean, is it a long-term-care facility building or is it a retirement home facility? The ministry staff stated quite forthrightly that yes, you could have a mixed use of this kind. You could have one floor which would be retirement homes and nine floors which would be long-term-care facilities. Then the follow-up question was really interesting: Could a person who had a mixed building of this kind change a floor which now had long-term-care beds and wasn't making much money for the company, and make it into a retirement home, which would bring a bigger profit? Yes. They said that could be done. In other words, it's conceivable that the 73,000 nursing home beds we have now—we have 40,000 retirement home beds—would actually decrease. Never mind increase, because they've been frozen and they're not going to increase. But they could actually start decreasing if the people in the industry, the seniors industry if you want to call it that, decided, "Hey, we can make a lot more money with a retirement home than we can with

this long-term-care bed level that we presently have. Let's close that up"—as far as I know, they said they could do it—"and make it a retirement home."

So we could actually have—I had always, in my own mind, calculated that we're going to be stuck at 73,000 beds for long-term-care facilities, and the retirement beds would start to increase drastically over the next 10 years. I guess it's going to have to—if people can afford it. But those 73,000 beds could decline because of the possibility of reconverting floors in a mixed building to be a retirement home because there's more money in it. That's a logical—some people frown, but the profit motive is an efficient motive; it's what makes our economy efficient. Unfortunately, some of the side effects are not particularly favourable, especially if it's going to harm seniors down the road—and there is a possibility of that happening.

The need for community and home care services was recognized by the Progressive Conservative government when an unprecedented $1.2 billion was invested to improve access to high-quality long-term-care and home care services across the province of Ontario. In 1998, to foster a more home-like atmosphere for residents, the PC government launched an extensive capital renewal plan which built 20,000 new long-term-care beds and upgraded 16,000 beds to comply with the new design standards. Can you imagine what would have happened if that had not taken place and those beds had not been built? Our hospitals would have collapsed some time ago with the expense of keeping low-need patients in hospital at hospital costs. This landmark investment was necessary since neither the Liberals nor the New Democrats had built any new beds since 1988.

To help ensure that Ontarians were provided with appropriate levels of care in all settings, the PC government's historic investment added thousands of front-line health jobs to the system, including 7,900 positions for registered nurses and registered practical nurses, as well as another 19,600 jobs for health care aides, homemakers and other front-line care workers.

These investments directly benefited families, the elderly, the disabled and their caregivers by providing additional beds, more community services, more health care providers and new or renovated facilities.

Let us turn our attention to alternate-level-of-care patients. These are patients waiting in hospital beds who could be better cared for in long-term-care facilities or retirement homes, if there were beds available. In February 2009, Tom Closson, president and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association said that "the single biggest challenge facing Ontario hospitals is the number of alternative-level-of-care patients waiting in hospitals for alternative levels of care."

According to the Ontario Hospital Association, approximately 20% of acute care beds are occupied by alternative-level-of-care patients—20%. That is costing this province a great deal of money. No wonder we're cutting back on nurses and everything else to pay for that.

Getting back to the need for more retirement home beds and long-term-care beds in our province, in 2005, eligible wait-list demands for long-term-care facilities were 12,708. By 2008, that number skyrocketed to an estimated 25,000, a 50% increase since this government took office. Our debt has gone up by a larger percentage, so maybe that 50% is not so bad, except that this directly affects—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 8, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Norm Miller: I would like to introduce Steve Low and his parents, Fran and Larry Low, who are in the members' west gallery, down from Parry Sound–Muskoka to have lunch with their MPP today. Please welcome them.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I'd like to introduce the grade 5 class from Oscar Peterson Public School in my riding of Mississauga–Erindale. I want to welcome them here. There are 100 students here, along with their teachers. I want to extend them a very warm welcome.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to welcome today the parents and family of our page Michelle Hendrikx—they're in the public gallery: her mother, Joanne; her grandma Anne; and her aunt Margaret. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of the member from Algoma–Manitoulin and page Lars Moffatt to welcome a couple offriends of his today: Adam Laskaris and Kathryn Laskaris. I'd also take this opportunity to wish Lars a happy birthday.

I would like to welcome the group from the Oxford Reformed Christian School who are seated in the Speaker's gallery. The member from Oxford and myself will be joining them later for a photograph. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would like to welcome the class of my daughter. Toby Molouba will be joining us today from Oscar Peterson school in Mississauga.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome all the personal support workers who are visiting Queen's Park here today and who are in the members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to wait your indulgence. My question is to the Premier, and I see he's just coming in right now.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

We'll start again.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: To the Premier of Ontario: Health and fitness clubs like Curves have joined us here at the park today. I'd like to welcome Andy Soumbos and Becky Frusher of Curves, as well as the executive director of the Fitness Industry Council of Canada, Brian Gilbank, to the House today. I appreciate them coming.

Like many Ontarians, though, Premier, they wonder why Dalton McGuinty is so afraid of a motion calling for the HST to be put to Ontario voters before the next election, and why you would backtrack on a deal made with your House leader so that it could be debated today.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, I want to welcome our guests to the Legislature today. I want to thank them for the work that they do. I think we all recognize that as we grapple with growing, ever-escalating health care costs, one of the things we need to do is to find more ways to encourage more Ontarians to participate in physical activity. So I thank them for the work that they're doing.

I think by way of so-called deals—I'm not familiar with the deal, as my colleague calls it, with respect to the House leaders, but I can say that we have a strong working partnership with the federal government. If it were not for them, if they would not act as our partners in this important initiative, we would not be able to move ahead for the HST. Again, I thank them for their cooperation in this regard.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The Premier isn't so bold or confident enough to put his record sales tax grab back to a vote in this chamber with his backbenchers so that the people of Ontario will have an opportunity to vote on this tax. Your House leader came looking for a deal to manage Liberal bills and agreed to debate our motion—until you saw it. It reminded you of your vow not to implement new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters. Our motion would have held you accountable to your promise by delaying the HST until after the next election. Are you running away from our motion because you're afraid how members, particularly in the Liberal caucus, would vote?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: This is an important new public policy initiative. It's not new in four other provinces, it's not new in 140 countries, but it is new for Ontarians. We've had a budget motion. There's the bill itself; there may have been as many as three votes on that. So we may have voted four times on this. It's also been the subject of a vote in Ottawa at the House of Commons. We are in compliance with the Taxpayer Protection Act. I think my honourable colleague understands that. We've debated—I'm not sure any public policy initiative in recent times has received more attention inside and outside this chamber, and that's only appropriate. We feel that we've had the necessary debate and we think now it's time to move on to strengthen this economy and create 600,000 more jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Dalton McGuinty used to think that the right thing to do was get the explicit consent of Ontario voters before raising their taxes. He was so certain it was right, he signed his name to an oath that said he would "not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters." But Dalton McGuinty now admits that "the HST will be an increase in taxation" for families and is driving ahead with his tax agenda as if his oath to Ontario voters didn't matter at all. Will you put to a vote our motion in this House and only implement the HST once there is a mandate from the voters to do so?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, it's been the subject of three and possibly four separate votes in this chamber. My honourable colleague and her party maintain that they are adamantly opposed to this budgetary measure, but should they ever earn the privilege of serving Ontarians in government, they are also absolutely committed to maintaining the HST in its place. I find that a little unusual.

Again, if it had not been for the support of Jim Flaherty, Janet Ecker, John Baird, Tony Clement, John Tory, Mike Harris, Senator Runciman and Prime Minister Harper, we would not be able to move ahead with this initiative. I want to thank them once again for their support. This is something that actually transcends partisanship. Thoughtful people know this is in the interest of our economy. It's all about 600,000 more jobs.

TAXATION

Mr. Toby Barrett: My question is for the Premier. Dalton McGuinty clearly has no difficulty raising taxes after looking Ontario voters in the eye and telling them that that he wouldn't raise them without their explicit consent. He had no inner bell go off when he said that the HST will be revenue-neutral, knowing that it would "be an increase in taxation." He hasn't even implemented his HST tax grab before planning a water tax grab.

Premier, how much will your water tax take out of the pockets of Ontario families?

1040

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to thank the member for his question, because we're very proud of the new bill that we introduced yesterday in this House, the Water Opportunities Act.

Like our Green Energy Act, it's the first of its kind in North America. It's designed to accelerate the development of a still stronger industry in Ontario when it comes to developing and exporting clean water technologies and services. There is at present in the world today, globally speaking, a $400-billion clean water industry. It should double during the course of the next five or six years. We think we can lead North America in that grand opportunity, and our Water Opportunities Act is about getting things going here to an even stronger extent.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Back to my question: When the media asked a direct question about the water tax yesterday, Dalton McGuinty refused to rule it out, so we all know what that means.

According to the member for Don Valley East, the water tax will cost families $50 a month; that's almost double the $350 increase to power bills that Dalton McGuinty brought in since taking office. It rivals the health tax that you introduced after taking office.

How much do you think Ontario families have in their pockets to take away with all of these Dalton McGuinty tax increases?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague's assertion is without foundation in fact. What we are working to do is to find ways, certainly here in Ontario, to conserve water, to use less water, to lower our water bills.

It turns out that about 25% of the water that we ship, after treating it inside our municipal water delivery system, leaks outside the pipes. We're paying to ship water which doesn't even end up at its ultimate destination, which is in our homes. We think we can do more to save water. Ultimately, what that will help us do is save money.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: The Premier has broken his word on taxes so many times, and there's no denying what the member for Don Valley East leaked about a $600-a-year water tax.

It doesn't stop there. Ontario families, as we know, are already hit with tax increases on televisions, iPods, electronics, electricity, gas, HST and plastic bags, all since the 2007 election. They can now look forward to Dalton McGuinty implementing a carbon tax. His member for downtown Toronto, the former mayor of Winnipeg, is already tweeting to rally support for the Premier's job-killing carbon tax.

Premier, what will it take for you to respect Ontario families and stay out of their wallets?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Ontario families are very concerned about a number of things: not only about household costs, and we recognize that, but they're also concerned about the quality of the air that their kids are breathing. They're worried about the quality of water that comes out of the tap when they turn that on. They're worried about their employment opportunities. They're worried about the quality of their health care. They're worried about the quality of their schools. My friends opposite may bring this myopic perspective of a family's concerns, but they are certainly short-sighted.

We understand that families are concerned about their levels of taxation—that's why we're reducing their taxes, effective January 1 of this year—but they're also concerned about their future. They want to make sure that we have a strong economy, good jobs, good schools, good health care, air that we can breathe and water that we can drink. We understand the big picture. We'll keep fighting for the big picture for our families.

APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Over the past week, government operatives have engaged in an unprecedented smear campaign against an officer of this Legislative Assembly. Ombudsman André Marin has had his good name and his stellar reputation dragged through the mud. Why is the McGuinty government going to such lengths to slander Mr. Marin?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question. I thought it would be an important opportunity to revisit some of the things that our government has done when it comes to putting in place greater measures of accountability, transparency and oversight.

When it comes to the sunshine list, we've expanded that to include OPG and Hydro One. That was not supported by the opposition.

We asked the Auditor General to take on greater responsibilities when it comes to auditing our hospitals, our universities and our schools. Again, that was not supported by the opposition. When it came to expenses, we also tightened the rules for travel and meals. The Integrity Commissioner now reviews the expenses of our 22 largest agencies. Again, when it comes to oversight, accountability and transparency, we've been trying to move forward; they keep trying to hold the line.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I wasn't asking about the sunshine list; I was asking this Premier to shine the light on what his government's agenda is in regard to Mr. Marin. Ontarians are repulsed by the hatchet job that Mr. Marin's reputation has had under this government's watch. They are submitting letters and emails and even issuing press releases showing their disgust.

Here is what Cynthia Glinka, a parent of an autistic child, said in her press release: "I continue to applaud the extraordinary efforts of Marin and his team of investigators. What the ministry dragged its feet on for years in our case, the Ombudsman investigated and made recommendations about in less than three short weeks."

Will the Premier call off the attack dogs and commit to a fair hiring process?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We're following a process which was strongly, and I thought eloquently and compellingly, supported by a member of the NDP caucus who said that it's important, notwithstanding the talents of any one particular officer of the Legislature, that we engage in a process and that we open it up to Ontarians to apply. That's exactly what we're doing, and I think we should respect that process, notwithstanding the considerable talents of the Ombudsman at present.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What this Premier and this government should respect is someone who has done his job very, very well for this Legislative Assembly. The attacks against Mr. Marin have gone beyond the pale. Even the Premier himself acknowledged that yesterday, but his words, unfortunately, rang rather hollow.

Today the Premier can actually demonstrate real sincerity in this very House. He can stand up and apologize to Mr. Marin. It's the right thing and the honourable thing to do. Will he do it right here and now?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think it's important that we follow a process. To quote a member of the NDP caucus, "New Democrats are adamant that even upon the occasion of a reappointment ... notwithstanding the stellar capacity of a person who has served that role, there should be the same process." The process is pretty clear: You advertise for the position, you see who's interested in the job and you vet them. That process is under way. I think we should all respect that.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. Today fitness groups are rallying outside of the Legislature to protest the McGuinty government's unfair harmonized sales tax. The new 8% tax on gym memberships is going to make healthy living much more expensive in the province.

Why is the Premier making it more expensive for Ontarians to stay healthy and fit?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I had an opportunity to speak to this very issue a moment ago, and I'm pleased to revisit it. I do know that one of the benefits that our fitness industry will gain as a result of our tax reforms is to be able to take advantage of these new input tax credits in purchasing new equipment, for example. That should help reduce their costs, and hopefully that will stand them in good stead.

But I think if you take a look—I haven't personally had the opportunity to take a look at what has happened to these kinds of businesses in those 140 other countries and four other provinces when the value-added tax of this nature was brought into place, but something tells me that they remain very strong businesses. That there remains a very strong industry.

I think it's in the interest of every single business that we have a healthy level of employment in our province. If people have jobs, then they have sufficient disposable income so they can take advantage of these kinds of businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, it's not just gym memberships that are going to bear the brunt of the Premier's unfair 8% tax. After-school lessons like soccer, karate and ballet will cost 8% more. Bicycles will cost 8% more. Even that staple of Canadian winter, renting ice time for hockey, will cost 8% more.

Why is the Premier making healthy and active living more expensive for Ontarians?

1050

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Our tax reforms will affect 17% of consumer purchases, meaning that 83% will remain unaffected. I've never once said to our families that this is an easy thing to do, but I continue to say that this is a very important thing for us to do.

We're going to have to do a few things to make our economy stronger. The old economy is not coming back; the one that we had prior to the recession, in its exact form, is not coming back. We have a higher dollar. We have higher energy costs. We have government deficits. We have retiring baby boomers. I'm convinced that Ontarians want us to do the kinds of things that will ensure that we grow stronger, that we have a stronger economy so that we maintain our capacity to support our schools and our health care and create more jobs, and the HST is an indispensable part of our plan to grow stronger.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: A new tax on an active lifestyle—gym memberships, kids' after-school programs, bicycles and ice rentals—makes no sense at all. We should be making healthy living choices more affordable for people, not more expensive. Policy decisions should be about improving the quality of life for families and lowering our health care costs. Why is the Premier going in exactly the opposite direction?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to assure my honourable colleague that we will not follow the NDP government example in Nova Scotia, which is taking their tax from 13% to 15%. I don't think that would be sensible or reasonable in the circumstances.

We're convinced that we have struck the right balance in terms of finding opportunities for families to save money. I want to remind Ontario families that in June of this year, because of the co-operative agreement we have with the federal government, if you're earning $80,000 or less you'll be getting a $100 cheque. If you're earning $160,000 or less in terms of family income, you'll be getting a $335 cheque, just in time to help families, at the beginning of the summer, transition through this transition period when it comes to our new HST.

APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. You said of André Marin, "As a result of the work that he has done, we've been able to reshape some of our policies and ended up with something that better serves the public interest." Premier, that sounds like a perfect endorsement. Were you just saying what you think the public wants to hear or will you stop blocking the Legislature from reappointing Mr. Marin?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I thank my colleague for the question. I know that if she takes the time to check the record and takes a look at all the statements that I've made about Mr. Marin before this latest conversation began, she will recognize that I've long been a supporter of Mr. Marin's and have welcomed his criticisms because I've found that they always help us improve the quality of our public policy. That is certainly the fundamental function of the Ombudsman.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The Premier's track record makes it a little difficult to believe what he says. He has

backtracked on his vow not to raise taxes so many times that Ontario families have lost count.

Your praise for Mr. Marin rings hollow when your decision to get him to reapply for his job is just a smokescreen to get rid of him. You're standing in the way of reappointment and exercising no control over the Liberal insiders who are defaming Marin.

Premier, you can't have it both ways: Will you come out of the corner you've painted yourself into, acknowledge that what has been done to Mr. Marin is wrong and let his name be brought back to this House for reappointment?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I have confidence in the process, and I would encourage my colleague to develop the same level of confidence.

I would say that it does beg some interesting questions. If the party opposite, the official opposition, is so interested in accountability and oversight, why did they stand against our moves to expand the coverage of the sunshine list? Why did they oppose our move to ensure that the Auditor General could cover hospitals, universities and schools? Why did they oppose our public posting of expenses that are mandatory for ministers, political staff and senior managers at our 22 largest agencies? Why did they stand against our move to expand the freedom-of-information coverage to cover OPG, Hydro One, universities and Cancer Care Ontario? Again, they tend to say one thing and, when push comes to shove, they stand against these kinds of measures.

TAXATION

M^me^ France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Promotion de la santé. Since August 2007, nicotine replacement therapy products have been exempt from the PST at point of sale. The former Minister of Health Promotion said, "These savings will assist a mother, father or one of your loved ones when they make the decision to quit smoking." Now, thanks to the HST, the cost of nicotine replacement therapy is set to rise by 8%.

My question is simple: Why is the present Minister of Health Promotion allowing this government to scrap this extension?

Hon. Margarett R. Best: Our government is committed to helping Ontarians break the cycle of tobacco addiction. Over the last four years, the Ministry of Health Promotion has invested $29 million in smoking cessation programs and training and research initiatives. Through the STOP program, the ministry has provided counselling and free nicotine replacement therapy to over 60,000 smokers. Twenty-nine hospitals are participating in the Smoke-Free-Ontario-funded hospital-based smoking cessation program. The Ottawa model identifies and treats smokers admitted to hospitals.

We continue to provide funding to the Canadian Cancer Society's Smokers' Helpline, reaching over 17,000 callers annually and approximately 8,000 smokers who registered for the online—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

M^me^ France Gélinas: We're talking about taxing nicotine replacement therapy here, and I want to quote again from the former Minister of Health Promotion: "If an Ontarian wants to quit smoking and uses the patch, the cost is" about "$300 a month.... With this announcement ... an Ontarian can ... save $24 while attempting to kick this habit."

That was back then—$24 saved. But with the McGuinty unfair HST, that person trying to quit smoking pays $24 more to the kick the habit.

We all know that smoking-related illnesses cost us $1.6 billion each and every year. How can the minister explain the rationale for adding 8% to the cost of nicotine replacement therapy when people are trying to kick this habit?

Hon. Margarett R. Best: Under the plan, 93% of taxpayers will pay less for personal income tax, putting more money in people's pockets. Lower- to middle-income families will also receive a credit of up to $260 a year for each adult and child.

We continue, as I said, to fund programs to help people to stop smoking. The Ministry of Health Promotion is in the process of developing a new five-year plan for new directions in tobacco control. This plan will focus on ways that we can help more people to stop smoking.

I want to take this opportunity to say to the public that smoking is bad for you and people who are smoking already should quit smoking, and to the ones who have not started smoking, this is an opportunity for me to say—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and it's about the government's drug reform package. My constituents up in Willowdale like the idea of cheaper generic drugs and they can't believe the amount that they now pay when compared to what people pay in other jurisdictions. Many people in my riding pay for their prescription drugs out of their own pockets. Not all Ontarians have private insurance plans. They are forced to pay out cash for important and frequently used antibiotics, contraceptives and other kinds of drugs. And when cold season comes to Ontario every year, they often really need antibiotic drugs, and often parents and their children have to pay for these antibiotics out of their own pockets.

How will the government's drug reform package make it cheaper for those ordinary, day-to-day antibiotics in the cold season?

1100

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member is absolutely right. Our reforms are very good news for families, including families whose kids go to Oscar Peterson

school. Our reforms will allow us to lower the price of generic drugs by—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order; they've been doing so well.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very excited today, because Oscar Peterson school is here with their teacher, my daughter, Toby Molouba.

These reforms are good for the families whose kids go to Oscar Peterson school. Our reforms will allow us to lower the price of generic drugs by at least 50%. Today, a patient would pay about $10.25 out of pocket for amoxicillin, a very common antibiotic. After our reforms, the price will be cut in half. Azithromycin is another common antibiotic. Today it's $32.80; it will be $12.33. That's $20 a family could use for groceries or other family bills.

These reforms are the right thing—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: I understand that generic drugs are going to be a lot cheaper for Ontario families. What I don't understand is why the members opposite don't understand that. They don't understand the meaning and concept of cheaper generic drugs. They criticize our plan to bring the cost of generics down. They're really against the needs of ordinary Ontarians. You members opposite need to understand that cheaper generic drugs are good for seniors, cancer patients and taxpayers.

Minister, have you got any insight as to why members opposite are opposed to our reforms? Why—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I trust the member is going to be directing the question to government policy and not opposition position.

Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I do not understand why the members opposite from both parties—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I just said to the questioner, and I remind the individual providing the answer, that I would very much like to hear about government policy and not opposition policy.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Our policy is very clear. We're on the side of families, we're on the side of lowering the cost of drugs for people with cancer, for people with high blood pressure, for people who need birth control pills, antibiotics—you name it. We're on the side of lower drug prices.

The members opposite have chosen to be on the side of the pharmacy owners instead of on the side of people who need drugs. This is consistent with the record of the party opposite. When they were in office, they cut almost $100 million from the Ontario drug program in 1996 and 1997, they instituted deductibles and they instituted co-payments for seniors and for Ontarians with disabilities. When the third party was in government, their plan to control drug costs was to cut $50 million from the Ontario drug benefit plan in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996. Our plan is to lower the price of drugs and expand the formula.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Premier. In September 2003, Dalton McGuinty signed an oath not to raise or implement new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters. But he has admitted that the HST "will be an increase in taxation" for families. Does the Premier's written promise mean nothing to him?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, this is a big undertaking; it takes a lot of work and a lot of partners. I want once again to thank the former Minister of Finance from my colleague's party, Jim Flaherty, for his support. I want to thank another former Minister of Finance from their party, Janet Ecker, for her support. I want to thank their former colleague John Baird; their former colleague Tony Clement; their former leader John Tory; another former leader, Mike Harris; Senator Bob Runciman as well; and, of course, Prime Minister Harper.

Without the support of the Conservatives in Ontario, we could not possibly move ahead with this initiative. I want to thank all Ontario Conservatives for their support for this initiative.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: The HST in Ontario is the Premier's choice. The Premier backtracked on his written pledge not to implement new taxes when he created the health tax, the HST and the backdoor energy tax. He backtracked on his vow not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters when he hiked up taxes for electricity, vehicles, and property transfers. He will backtrack on his oath to taxpayers once again when he brings in a water tax and a job-killing carbon tax.

Premier, will you stop disrespecting your oath, show some respect for Ontario voters and put our HST motion to a vote in this House before it rises for your summer holiday?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, this matter has been the subject of three and maybe even four votes in this very Legislature. It has been the subject of extensive conversation and debate both inside and outside the Legislature. If my colleague is still in doubt as to why it is that the Conservatives around the province are supporting this, I would encourage him to sit down and speak with his federal counterpart, Tony Clement, and have a one-on-one with him in his constituency office in his riding. If you just give Mr. Clement a little bit of time, I'm sure he's going to turn my colleague around, help him understand the error of his ways and help him understand why it is that we've transcended partisan differences and, working hand in hand with federal Conservatives, we're moving ahead with an initiative that will create 600,000 more jobs.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday, three leading environmental

organizations voiced their opposition to the proposed Open for Business Act. Ecojustice, the Canadian Environmental Law Association and the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy all say that the act will undermine public participation and the public right to appeal polluting activities in communities.

The McGuinty government talks a lot about increasing transparency. Why is it proposing legislation that would remove citizen rights and reduce accountability on environmentally damaging industrial activities? Why?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I think that those organizations are wrong. This current system has been in place for over 30 years. It is a paper-based system. We think it's about time to bring those proposals into the 21st century. We think that modernizing our approval system is the right way to go. Over 6,000 applications are made on an annual basis. It's all in a paper-based system.

We believe that our ministry should be involved with the higher-risk situations, rather than taking a look at all of the situations that are out there. That's what the modernization of approvals is all about. It's all about bringing our systems that we have been using for over the last 30 years into the 21st century.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Minister, you're well aware that this has nothing to do with your moving from paper to Commodore 64. This is a question of whether or not people have rights to comment on environmental regulation. The press release from the environmental groups is very clear: The proposed act weakens accountability. The government will no longer be required to take the public's views into account before environmental decisions are finalized. Maybe your staff didn't brief you on this part of the act, but you need to be aware of it.

While reducing public rights to comment on industrial activities, the McGuinty government is increasing business rights through a new registry that allows companies to comment on new regulations impacting them. Is this what "open for business" means: more power for businesses to veto regulations and less rights for the public to protect their communities? Is that what's on the table—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Anyone can make comments with respect to anything that goes into the registry—not just businesses—including the environmental community.

I would just like to put it to the member this way: There are sometimes applications that take about a year and a half to get the required certificates of approval, yet these organizations, these businesses, are operating during that period of time. That is wrong. What we should be concerned about within the Ministry of the Environment or within society are the environmental outcomes. We believe that the environmental outcomes that we're dealing with are better served under a modernized system in which the ministry and in which we as a society look at the most important high-risk activities. That's what this is all about. We want to bring the system into the 21st century. Most of the people out there agree with us, and I'm sure that in time, the environmental community will see it—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1110

RETIREMENT HOMES

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the minister responsible for seniors. We know there are about 700 retirement homes in the province with approximately 40,000 people living in them and the sector has not been regulated to date. The home my parents live in is great, but we know that some retirement homes are not so great.

For the first time in provincial history, the government has moved to regulate retirement homes by introducing Bill 21 to make retirement home living safer for residents. Bill 21 has gone through second reading and is now at public hearings. There's widespread support for regulation at the hearings, but there have been some concerns raised about the regulatory authority that will be established. Minister, what assurances can you give the House that the retirement home regulatory authority—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: Thank you for the question from the thoughtful member from Guelph. I would say that this is historic legislation. The province has never regulated retirement homes. There are 700 of them. All of us have them in our areas. The authority will have the ability to license, inspect and take licences away. It will have care and safety standards that it will be required to enforce. It gives strong rights to residents. We've been at this for three years now. It follows the advice of roughly 800 people who consulted in 2007.

To the question on the independence of the board: I want to provide the member and the public with the assurance that, firstly, the government will appoint the chair and three additional members. The other five will be appointed on the basis of criteria established by the government. I can assure the public that this board will represent the interests of the residents.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you, Minister, for the information about the regulatory authority. Our seniors will appreciate your assurance that the regulatory board will be well-balanced and represent the interests of seniors, licensees and government.

One of the key roles of the regulatory authority will be licensing but also inspecting and enforcing care and safety standards. One of the things we've heard at committee are concerns about whether or not there—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Hamilton East will please come to order.

Please continue.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: We've heard concerns about whether or not the public will have an opportunity for

input into the care and safety standards. We've also heard some concerns about whether there will be an appropriate complaint process for residents in retirement homes if they're not meeting the standards. Can the minister address these two concerns that have been raised at committee?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: Thank you, and this is for the answer. On the first part of the question on setting the care and safety standards: If the bill is passed, we will begin work immediately on the determination of safety and care standards.

I want to provide the public with some reassurance that there will be ample opportunity for input into those regulations, including some round tables where we will get broad advice, and we will post the regulations for at least 30 days so people can comment on them.

On the standards, I think we are allowing good public input into it. In terms of residents' rights—this is very important—the resident will have the right to appeal any particular complaint they have. There are very strong residents' rights in it: three avenues of complaint procedure and good rights for the residents.

WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: My question is for the Minister of National Resources. CWD, or chronic wasting disease, affects white-tailed deer, elk and moose—cervids, basically. It's a fatal disease that affects these animals' brains.

The reason I mention this is because of the escape of the game-farmed animal red deer in the Sudbury French River area over the past two years. These escaped deer have the potential to infect wildlife with CWD. Not only that, but red-tailed deer also have the ability and do mate in the wild with elk. This alone threatens the elk gene pool in the Sudbury area.

In January this year, the MNR was informed of the escape, but failed to take action. Why has the ministry failed to take any action to protect the wildlife in Ontario?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I appreciate the question. Certainly, chronic wasting disease is a progressive and fatal disease of the nervous system of deer, moose and elk, and our government continues to take measures to minimize the potential spread. The good news is that it hasn't been detected in Ontario. It has been detected in two other Canadian provinces and several US states, so we continue to take measures to ensure that it doesn't come to Ontario.

We're developing a CWD surveillance and response plan. We've tested over 7,000 wild deer, moose and elk since 2002, and so far, all the results have been negative. We've implemented a regulation prohibiting the possession of high-risk deer and elk carcass parts that are harvested in other jurisdictions.

We're working with farmers to make sure that we have a plan that works with them, to capture and relocate as many of the escaped deer as we can.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: The 2002 program that came into place was a program designed to establish protocols in the event that it was identified.

Here is a quote from Dr. Terry Quinney, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters' provincial manager of fish and wildlife: "It is inexcusable that the government has failed to heed all the warnings and learn from the experience in other jurisdictions where the spread of the disease has resulted in the death of tens of thousands of deer.... The abundant, healthy white-tailed deer population in Ontario, and the much smaller elk population, are being put at risk by inaction on the part of the MNR. Once CWD strikes in Ontario there will be virtually no means of eradicating it."

Minister, there is evidence that these red deer are also reproducing in the wild and becoming a self-sustaining population. Why has the ministry not bothered to recapture, contain or manage the escaped deer, which have the potential to infect wildlife with CWD?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: The ministry is monitoring a small population of red deer. Certainly, the numbers have been fluctuating, based on people telling us stories, so we're monitoring it. We've been making sure that the escaped deer from the farms in the North Bay area have been monitored.

We take this issue very seriously. Immediate action was taken by staff and a cull was initiated. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency test results showed that red deer that were culled by MNR do not have chronic wasting disease.

Escaped or released farm deer pose a risk to public safety, farmers' crops and domestic livestock. Due to the risk these escaped red deer pose to our native wildlife, a plan to dispatch the animals was put in place. I want to take this opportunity to thank local farmers and hunters for their assistance in removing the red deer.

We understand the gravity of the situation, and we'll continue to monitor—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The Premier phoned the mayor of Toronto this week and asked him to trust him on transit. Given that the Premier has already broken his word to Toronto families who most need new public transit, why does he think that the mayor should trust him to keep his promise this time?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There's some really good news here. Notwithstanding our financial challenges, we have found a way to move forward with $9.5 billion in investment in public transit. This is the single largest one-time investment in public transit in the history of this country. That's how big this is.

I would encourage my honourable colleague to join in the celebration and to find ways for us to work together—the three parties, the city of Toronto and Metrolinx—to get this new capital invested, to get the jobs

under way, so that the people of Toronto can benefit from this new transit at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's now very clear that Toronto's Finch LRT and the Scarborough RT lines are in danger of being completely axed. A Metrolinx report being released today says that not one penny has been allocated for construction of these crucial lines over the next five years.

Why should anyone believe the Premier's commitment to Transit City, Toronto and Torontonians when over the next five years he couldn't free up even one single penny for the construction of transit lines serving families that need them the very most in this city?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague just can't take yes for an answer. We're moving ahead with the $9.5 billion. It's a five-in-10 plan. It's the largest transit investment in Canadian history.

Let's take a look at our record thus far, even before we went ahead with this $9.5-billion plan. We've invested $3.7 billion since 2003 in public transit in Toronto. The gas tax alone has provided $849 million over the first six years of the program.

We're spending $870 million right now to extend the TTC subway to York region. Work has already started on the Sheppard LRT. We've already spent over $700 million for new TTC hybrid buses, subway cars, track repairs and improvements.

1120

Track repairs or track record: We're going in the right direction when it comes to our government's investment in public transportation.

BIODIVERSITY

Mr. Rick Johnson: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, you understand more than most that our biodiversity sustains us. That's why I was pleased to learn this week that you helped fulfill a recommendation of Ontario's biodiversity strategy with the release of two reports updating Ontarians on the state of biodiversity in this province.

As a member of the Ontario Biodiversity Council, can you please share with the members of the Legislature and those watching at home today what the work of the council has accomplished? In my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, many of my constituents work in industries that rise or fall in lockstep with our biodiversity. We know the pressures on biodiversity and are keenly interested in the findings of the reports.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I want to thank the honourable member for the question.

The member is correct: On Monday, I was joined by my fellow members of the Ontario Biodiversity Council at Hart House to release the two landmark reports you spoke of. I'd like to first thank the 22 partners on the Ontario Biodiversity Council for the time—the considerable time—that they took to volunteer to guide the implementation of Ontario's biodiversity strategy. In the five years since the launch of the biodiversity strategy, the council has been invaluable to my ministry, helping us to fulfill our commitment to report to the public on progress in 2010, which also happens to be the International Year of Biodiversity.

The State of Ontario's Biodiversity report assesses the pressures placed on Ontario's biodiversity. In the reports released this week, we can see that our biodiversity is under pressure from human activity, which includes habitat loss, urban development, invasive species and climate change.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Johnson: My thanks to the minister. Minister, in the reports released this week, it appears that over 200 years of development has had its toll on Ontario's biodiversity. Native species are at risk, habitat has been lost and our climate is changing. The reports that the biodiversity council released on Monday paint the picture of a province in flux, where our biodiversity is threatened.

We are all connected to our biodiversity. What do these reports tell Ontarians and how has the McGuinty government responded to the goals of Ontario's biodiversity strategy?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: The honourable member is correct: Our biodiversity is under threat, and the reports released share with Ontarians very important information: They provide a baseline against which all future challenges and successes will be measured.

By quantifying our biodiversity, the McGuinty government and all Ontarians will have the information required to make good conservation decisions. However, the McGuinty government and our ministry have already acted. Back in 2007, we passed the Endangered Species Act, the gold standard in species-at-risk protection, which includes $18 million in stewardship funding over four years.

Our current state of biodiversity is a result of planning decisions that were made in the past. The future can and will be shaped by the decisions that we and all Ontarians make right now.

Thank you for the question.

POLICE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Since Ian Scott's appointment as SIU director, the relationship between police and his office has deteriorated to the point where former Ontario Chief Justice Patrick LeSage was called in to mediate.

It now appears that Mr. LeSage's efforts have failed, as the AG won't get involved. Strained relations between the SIU and the policing community will continue now that Mr. Scott has intervened in the Schaeffer-Minty court case. His intervention in this case could lead to police chiefs across Ontario facing charges under the Police Services Act when the matter shouldn't have been allowed to proceed in the first place.

Minister, your silence has been deafening while relations between police and the SIU keep sinking. Why did you say nothing before the SIU director intervened in a case, turning it into a circus that is eroding the image of policing in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I'll probably give the supplementary to the Attorney General, but I do want to first of all say that because he is an independent person, we do not interfere with the decision-making. However, let me just say that we do have a wonderful working relationship with our policing partners. We will continue to have that wonderful working relationship with our policing partners, and that extends to a multi-ministerial approach. Why do we do that? Because we understand that the people of Ontario want to have confidence in their government so that we can pass laws and implement programs and policies that enhance community safety. That is what has been happening in the province of Ontario since 2003, since we took over as the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Minister, I'm asking you why you are doing nothing while the integrity of policing throughout this province is at stake. It's shameful that the Police Association of Ontario and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police have had to hire lawyers to seek intervener status in this case, when police are supposed to be working in our communities, not arguing in our courtrooms. It's shameful that police are now being forced to fight their own justice partners in the courts instead of fighting crimes on the street.

We've heard the Attorney General defend the SIU in the House and in the media, but no one is standing up for the police. So I'll ask you this: As the minister responsible for policing in this province, why are you not defending police on a matter of urgent public importance, which is maintaining the integrity of policing, the basic foundation of a lawful society?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: My colleague just spoke very eloquently about the respect that we have for the hard work that the police do, and we have respect as well for the work that our other institutions of justice do. You can have respect for that work on a day-to-day basis, but also have respect for a judicial process which requires that arguments and decisions be made within the courtroom and not either in Legislatures or hallways or through the press.

It is the foundation of our society. It is not contrary to the respect that we have for all the participants of justice to say that when matters are before the court, we will not intervene, interfere or get in the way of that decision-making process.

VETERANS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. There are currently up to 16 War of 1812 soldiers improperly buried across the street from Battlefield Park in Stoney Creek. While these individuals sacrificed their lives for what would become Canada, their remains lie in disarray, some even visible above ground.

Will the Premier work with the city of Hamilton and the Battlefield House Museum by pledging funding for a proper archaeological excavation, burial and recognition for these fallen soldiers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We'll look into it.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the advice coming from the member of the same party. We'll look into this.

It's the first that it has been brought to our attention. I'm eager to learn a little bit more about it through the supplementary, but I think there's a legitimate issue here, and we undertake to look into it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: The 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 is fast approaching us, and the time has come for our government to take the right action for these fallen soldiers. These individuals paid the ultimate price for our fledgling country, and their final resting place should reflect this.

In a moment, I will present the Premier with my written request for provincial funding to support the efforts of the Battlefield House Museum in bringing these soldiers to their proper final resting place.

Will the Premier financially work with us to honour these fallen soldiers and help fund their proper burial?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to assure my colleague that we'll take a close look at this and find out what the responsible thing to do in the circumstances is.

One of the things that I've always thought of as our responsibility here in elected office is to give expression to Ontarians at their best and, indeed, their very best. They are very supportive of our veterans and all the sacrifices that they made that contribute to the extraordinary quality of life in this vital democracy here that we enjoy each and every day.

Again, I undertake to my colleague to take a look at this for him.

TAXATION

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a question today for the Minister of Revenue. I've got a great company in my riding, a very innovative company, called Entripy Custom Clothing. They're a leading provider of custom apparel in Canada. This Oakville company currently employs 25 people. They provide excellent jobs, and they're growing. They've told us that they expect to save $15,000 to $20,000 in the first year with the tax reform we're introducing.

Jas Brar, a founder of Entripy, has stated, "We want to bring on more quality staff and create more quality jobs, and this is one thing that will help us get there a little bit sooner."

Minister, how will companies like Entripy create jobs as a result of our tax reform package?

1130

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my friend for inviting me to visit Entripy just the other day. It is a true Ontario success story. Mr. Brar, who started the company 11 years ago when he was a student at the University of Toronto, has turned it into a local success, a company that is actually supplying goods and services to all the Canadian provinces and also to our territories.

But he has a vision of expanding his business even more, and what he was able to tell us and share with us is what it would mean, in his own particular business, if he was going to have his cost of business go down. When asked by the media, "What are you going to do with that money," he said, "I'm going to hire more people, because I have a great product and I want to be able to expand into the US market."

His company is based through the Internet, so he has been able to get a competitive advantage. It's exactly those small businesses that will lead us out of where we are today. It's—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Minister, for the answer.

Job creation is obviously important to everybody in this province. When I'm talking with other people in my riding, however, some appear to have been misled by others into believing that all items in the province are increasing by 13%. I think everyone wants to see a more competitive province, but no one wants to see this on the backs of those who can afford to pay the least. There are those who are currently unemployed and seniors who live on fixed incomes, and they don't have much flexibility in their budgets. How is the tax reform going to affect low-income Ontarians and other Ontarians who are currently on fixed incomes?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for the question. First of all, I'd say to the people who have been prophesying economic doom and gloom that I think reality will teach them all a lesson starting July 1.

What we've done under our tax reform package, which includes the harmonization—having one sales tax in Ontario instead of two—is that we are substantially reducing income taxes for people and business right across the board. But we've taken special care to increase credits for those people who have the least—I'm thinking of seniors on fixed incomes, middle-class families with a lot of children and people on social assistance. We are increasing credits that are available to people, and they will start rolling out as early as this August.

I can tell people that there are also the tax-free transitional payments that we've been able to secure with funding from the federal government. The federal Conservative government and all those Ontario Conservative members have voted for this to allow us to provide that important relief to people in the first year as we transition.

We'll make sure we are looking after the people with the least, but most importantly—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Minister of Health. The minister has been talking about how her government is expanding access to drugs through her pharmacy reforms. She has even called a moratorium on implementation of the changes so that she could take more time to review the submissions. The minister claims that she wants to take more time to get things right, but all the while her colleague the member from Windsor West is engaging in her own anti-pharmacist campaign.

Minister, is this moratorium another move for optics, as the initial consultations were? Are you actually going to enter into meaningful consultations with pharmacies? They want to know.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I want to be very clear about this: We are going to be eliminating professional allowances, and we are going to be bringing down the price of drugs for the people of this province. What we have done is allocated almost $300 million to put back into pharmacies to support access in rural areas and to support pharmacies through this period of transition. Our vision is a pharmacy system where pharmacists are, of course, paid to dispense drugs, but increasingly paid to provide services for people in this province.

We are committed to the reforms; we will not back down on these reforms. We are taking the time to get it right. The consultation period ended just a week ago. We are taking the time to get it right.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Well, if the minister truly believes she was expanding access to pharmaceuticals, she wouldn't be putting these changes on hold in order to get things right. I also bet that her colleague from Windsor West wouldn't be spending thousands of dollars on a smear campaign regarding pharmacy.

Minister, is your government spending more taxpayer dollars on a purely PR campaign or are you actually going to enter into meaningful consultations?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We have had very, very meaningful consultations. We have received over 60 submissions.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Pupatello.com.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: My seatmate here is urging me to send people to Pupatello.com to get the whole story. People can also go to Ontario.ca/fairdrugprices to get the whole story.

Again, I am astonished that the member opposite would be on the side of higher profits for pharmacies instead of lower drug prices for the people of Ontario.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome the staff, teachers, parents and students from Dunsford District Elementary School in the

riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. John Yakabuski: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Earlier in question period, the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order, please. I need to hear the point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. It's not about Pupatello.com—my question.

The member for Willowdale asked a question of the Minister of Health earlier, and you, in the process of the non-question and also any part of it which applies to standing order 21(h) and (i), admonished the member for directing criticism as opposed to a question.

What I would like a clarification on is that he never actually did ask a question. I'm wondering why the minister then would have had the opportunity to respond to something that wasn't a question at all. Any part of it that would have been a question should have been ruled out of order in the first place.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for the question. That happens quite regularly from both sides of the House because, as the honourable member knows, I am very conscious of watching the clock and allowing adequate time for a question and answer. As I may have cut off the member from Willowdale today, I have certainly cut off members of his own party and members of the third party in the asking of questions, and ministers have still answered.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In the answer to the member from Whitby–Oshawa, the Minister of Health mentioned a website called Pupatello.com. It actually goes to a dating service's chat room, homes-for-sale and apartments-for-rent website. So perhaps the minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That's not a point of order.

NOTICES OF REASONED AMENDMENTS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(c), the opposition House leader, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, has filed notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts. The order for second reading of Bill 68 may therefore not be called today.

I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), the House leader of the official opposition, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, has notified the Clerk of his intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 72, An Act to enact the Water Opportunities Act, 2010 and to amend other Acts in respect of water conservation and other matters. The order for second reading of Bill 72 may therefore not be called today.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have the real, distinct pleasure to introduce to the Legislature and to each member the newly appointed ambassador of Vietnam, His Excellency Le Sy Vuong Ha, and the president of the Canada-Vietnam Friendship Association, Mr. Chuck Do, who is inviting you at 5 today to enjoy the new appointment from Vietnam. Thank you very much, and welcome to all of you.

Mr. Robert Bailey: In the west gallery today we have a couple of members of the Ontario Association of Food Banks: Todd Jaques and Nicola Cernik. I'd like to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to introduce some friends who have helped me raise money for the fund for the earthquake that happened in Chile, and they're here today to listen to that statement. Kevin Lee from Scadding Court and Magdalena Diaz from Chile Can Rise are here. A few other members are likely to come soon, and I'll mention them as they come. Thank you for coming.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to make sure we welcome our guests from TOGA here today to Queen's Park. We appreciate the good work and the fine food and flowers that the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance puts on our table. We won't get into any togas today.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome guests from the St. Mary School Choir and Orchestra, seated in both the east and the west galleries. They're visiting Queen's Park today from London, Ontario. Staff, students and parents: Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Speaker, could they sing us a tune? Please?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No—maybe if I had unanimous consent.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome to the Speaker's gallery Mr. Gord Miller, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. Gord, welcome. Accompanying Gord, from my riding, is Suzanne van Bommel. Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ONTARIO GREENHOUSE ALLIANCE

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance, who are here at Queen's Park. Once again, they have brought many of

the great things that are grown in Ontario's greenhouses, such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and flowers.

Not only do they provide great local food year-round, Ontario's greenhouses are an important part of our economy. They have invested over $2 billion directly into our province and are targeting an additional $20 million in investment each year. Directly and indirectly, they support 35,000 Ontario jobs and contribute to the success of many other sectors, such as packaging and trucking.

But like all business, they need the proper climate to be able to grow and flourish. Our greenhouse operators are struggling with government red tape and overregulation. They are frustrated with a government that feels it is fair to hike hydro rates while refusing to support cogeneration projects within greenhouses that make fiscal and economic sense.

They're working hard to build their businesses and be competitive. We need to make sure that the government isn't holding them back. We need to work together to support Ontario's greenhouses and our agriculture industry to ensure that good things continue to grow in Ontario.

I want to thank all the members of TOGA who are here today to share the successes and challenges they are facing. I look forward to hearing from them about what we can do to help them be competitive and successful. I encourage all members to take the time to meet with the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance this afternoon in the dining room to taste some of the good things that grow in Ontario.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Bob Chiarelli: Ontario seniors have been subjected to a multi-million dollar, US-style negative political ad campaign at the hands of the big chain pharmacies working in partnership with the Conservatives, all to protect their super-profits. However, not only will our government continue on its path to cut generic drug prices in half, we will continue to invest and build capacity in our health care system.

We are investing over $120 million in my riding of Ottawa West–Nepean for redevelopment of the Queensway Carleton Hospital. The groundbreaking this summer will include expansion of operating rooms, more diagnostic imagining equipment, ambulatory program expansion, outpatient rehabilitation and a 15-station dialysis unit to serve 100 patients.

This addition comes on the heels of the hospital's recent opening of the Irving Greenberg Family Cancer Centre, with provincial government and Greenberg family investments being $82 million and $11 million respectively. Residents in Ottawa West–Nepean are receiving the health care investments and services they need, and they also look forward to lower drug costs.

ENERGY RATES

Mr. Randy Hillier: Since the Liberal government passed the Green Energy Act, Ontario Hydro's global adjustment keeps going up and up. For many manufacturers and businesses, the global adjustment now actually dwarfs the cost of energy itself. We've lost 62 mills in northern Ontario, numerous investment projects and untold small businesses because of it, yet Dalton McGuinty still insists that he supports manufacturing. He even has the gall to call the global adjustment a "provincial benefit" on hydro bills. "McGuinty benefit" would be far more accurate. Dalton McGuinty benefits, and our province suffers.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Rosario Marchese: As all of you know, Chile was hit by a major earthquake and tsunami in late February and early March. The destruction was immense. Along a 1,000-kilometre coastal area the tsunami destroyed port cities, villages, homes and boats in areas where fishing is the main income.

What we have done in response to this in order to be helpful, in collaboration with the Chilean consulate, the Chile Can Rise Coalition—two of them were able to make it here today, Magdalena Diaz and Yuri Navarro—and Scadding Court Community Centre, is to raise over $50,000 to help with earthquake relief.

I want to thank many of the MPPs who contributed and some MPPs who were able to make it on April 29, because that helped to make it a successful event. I want in particular to thank Scadding Court, which organized the funding without taking any administrative fee, which allows all the money to go directly to Chile. The group that is organizing the building of the housing is Un Techo para Chile, and with our $50,000 we're going to be able to build 50 temporary homes for people there.

I want to thank everybody who was involved and the various groups that were there to help us out.

1510

INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Today is May 19, and that is also World IBD Day. On behalf of my constituents in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and the one in 160 Canadians living with inflammatory bowel disease, IBD for short, I would like to draw your attention to this increasingly common, serious and incurable digestive disease.

Inflammatory bowel disease is the blanket term for both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. IBD affects over 200,000 Canadians, generally in the prime of their life, and it's on the rise among children. A study released at Sick Kids Hospital last August showed that pediatric IBD rates in Ontario are high and growing. IBD presents added complications for children because the diseased intestine is not able to do its job, which is to absorb nutrients for growth.

Whether young or not so young, Crohn's and colitis exact a devastating toll on Canadian society. A Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada report in 2008 puts the true cost of IBD to the Canadian economy at $1.8 billion

per year. That's just the direct costs. The indirect costs to Canadian society and to people living with IBD are even greater: lower participation in the workforce, social stigma, and difficulty getting diagnosed and treated.

On Sunday, June 6, I will be attending the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada's Heel 'n' Wheel-A-Thon in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I want to thank Kevin Eagleson who, year after year, organizes this event in Strathroy.

Today, I encourage members to learn more about IBD. A greater openness about Crohn's and colitis will lead to better quality of life for people living with IBD. They are your friends, your neighbours, your family, constituents and colleagues.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Robert Bailey: I rise today to make a statement in regards to human trafficking.

On Monday, more than 50 individuals attended a Stop the Human Trafficking Awareness seminar in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, hoping to establish a local response plan and to address this insidious problem.

Each year, millions of men, women and children are victimized and exploited for labour and sexual purposes. Hoping for a better future for themselves and their families, they are lured by false promises into a life of slavery and deprivation.

This event, which was organized by Michelle Batty, executive director of the Sexual Assault Survivors of Sarnia–Lambton and the Committee Against the Trafficking of Women and Children, to help service providers understand human trafficking in their community and to provide tools to identify victims and generate a community response.

Vera Lawlor, president of the committee, feels this is an important topic. The committee knows that this could be happening because of the proximity to the United States.

The Stop the Human Trafficking Committee is committed to raising awareness about all forms of exploitation, typically in the sex industry or forced labour, locally, globally and nationally.

The event included presentations from Marty Van Doren, the RCMP human trafficking coordinator, Heather Richardson of the Peel Regional Police, and UNICEF, to name but a few.

The committee hopes to not only raise awareness, but establish a protocol for helping these people so that they won't be trapped into this type of human slavery.

Human trafficking will only stop when the public is educated and community protocols are established and supported.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Mr. Charles Sousa: I rise today to recognize the contributions of personal support workers to our health care system and to proclaim today as the first annual Personal Support Worker Day here at Queen's Park.

Personal support workers assist the elderly and those with disabilities with hands-on care so that they can live independently in their own homes. Personal support workers also attend to the daily needs of our seniors in nursing and retirement homes and long-term-care facilities. Personal support workers are on the front line of care and provide tremendous support to patients and their families all over Ontario.

With us today are more than 40 SEIU personal support workers who are joining us from communities around the province for Personal Support Worker Day here at Queen's Park. They are here today to meet with members to share ideas about how we can ensure quality and continuity of care for patients receiving home care. Our government is committed to quality health care and to putting the patient first.

We know that many seniors prefer to age at home and that personal support workers are key to making this possible.

As we work to transform the health care system to ensure quality, accountability and sustainability, we know that personal support workers will be vital in the provision of home care.

Again, I would like to thank personal support workers, especially those here today, for their care and support of Ontario families.

ONTARIO GREENHOUSE ALLIANCE

Mr. Pat Hoy: I ask you to please join me in welcoming members of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance, who are visiting with us here today. The alliance represents the largest cluster of greenhouse production in North America, most of which continues to be in Essex county, with the second-largest found in the Niagara region.

Products grown in Ontario greenhouses include cut flowers—over 236 million stems per year; potted plants—over 208 million per year; bedding plants—over one billion per year; peppers—over 110 million pounds per year; cucumbers—over 240 million pounds per year, enough to circle the earth twice; and tomatoes—over 390 million pounds per year, enough to fill 65 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

The greenhouse industry has a present investment of over $2 billion in structures, not including warehouses, packaging houses and associated businesses. Greenhouse growers make a significant contribution to our economy and our rural communities.

On behalf of myself and my colleague Bruce Crozier, I encourage all members to attend the reception in the legislative dining room from 3 to 5:30 this afternoon. This is a great opportunity to meet our friends from the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance and to pick up a sample of their beautiful plants and delicious vegetables, grown right here in our backyard: right here in Ontario.

GEOFF PARKER

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's with great sadness that I stand before members of the Ontario Legislature today.

Early Tuesday morning, Colonel Geoff Parker, a member of the Royal Canadian Regiment, was killed when a suicide bomb exploded in the Afghan capital of Kabul.

Colonel Parker was born and raised in Oakville, Ontario, and he's the highest-ranking Canadian to pay the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan. He leaves behind his wife, M.J., and two young children, Charlie and Alexandria.

Colonel Parker was described as a rising star in the Canadian military. Colonel Simon Hetherington, the deputy commander of Task Force Kandahar, said that Colonel Parker "was well known, highly respected and considered a best friend by countless army officers and soldiers across Canada." He said "his potential was undeniable."

I'd like to extend my sincerest condolences to the family and the friends of Colonel Parker.

Speaker, I would ask that a minute of silence be observed in honour of a man who has paid the supreme sacrifice for his country.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would ask all members and our guests to please join as we observe a moment of silence for the passing of Colonel Parker.

The House observed a moment's silence.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LUSO CANADIAN CHARITABLE SOCIETY ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2010

Mrs. Albanese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr34, An Act respecting the Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

TAXATION AMENDMENT ACT (FOOD BANK DONATION TAX CREDIT FOR FARMERS), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS (CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT AUX AGRICULTEURS POUR DONS À UNE BANQUE ALIMENTAIRE)

Mr. Bailey moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 78, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide a tax credit to farmers for donating to Ontario food banks certain agricultural products they produced / Projet de loi 78, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour prévoir un crédit d'impôt pour les agriculteurs qui font don de certains produits agricoles qu'ils produisent à des banques alimentaires de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We need the bill.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

1520

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I apologize.

Over the past year, the demand placed upon our communities' food banks has increased by over 20%, according to the Ontario Association of Food Banks who are here with us today. In fact, last year, over 375,000 Ontarians were forced to turn to their local food bank each month.

This increased demand is only compounded by the fact that donations have been declining from large-scale food manufacturers and corporate donors. Today in Ontario, roughly 25 million pounds of fresh nutritious food are disposed of or plowed back into farmers' fields across the province due to a lack of incentives and the cost placed on farmers to collect and donate that excess produce.

I rise today to introduce this bill, which will provide a tax credit to farmers for donating to Ontario food banks certain agricultural products they produce. This bill aims to both neutralize those costs placed on farmers and to collect and donate that excess produce.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just take this opportunity to remind everyone that, when they hand me the bill, I read the first page. On the second page is an explanatory note, and you need to read the explanatory note. If there are long explanatory notes, you can actually shorten the explanatory note. Just to remind all members.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I appreciate the comment, Speaker. I will reduce it by one sentence.

CONDOMINIUM OWNERS PROTECTION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE CONDOMINIUMS

Mr. Marchese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to condominiums / Projet de loi 79, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui a trait aux condominiums.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'll read fast. The Condominium Act, 1998, is amended to require that every declaration contain the standard provisions set out in the regulations. A duty of fair dealing is imposed on all the declarants and condominium corporations in their deal-

ings with owners and purchasers of condominium units. The misuse of proxy instruments is made an offence liable to a fine.

The bill amends the act to permit a corporation to access its reserve fund for the purposes of installing renewable energy and other energy-efficient technologies and replacing common elements following reasonable wear and tear.

A review board is established under part VIII.1. The review board's objects include advising the public on matters relating to condominiums, providing information to condominium corporations and owners of condominium units on matters of concern to them and assisting in the resolution of disputes, including disputes involving the validity of proxy instruments.

The bill amends the objects of the corporation designated under the act to include the object of serving as a consumer protection agency. Requirements are included as to the composition of the board of the corporation so that at least half of the directors must have experience in consumer protection and advocacy, and at least two directors must have experience representing homeowners.

The bill also requires that conciliation conducted by the corporation be completed within the prescribed time.

I'll leave it at that.

1518186 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2010

Mr. Rinaldi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr32, An Act to revive 1518186 Ontario Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

KATELYN BEDARD BONE MARROW AWARENESS MONTH ACT, 2010

LOI KATELYN BEDARD DE 2010 SUR LE MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION AU DON DE MOELLE OSSEUSE

Mr. Crozier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 80, An Act to make the month of November Bone Marrow Awareness Month / Projet de loi 80, Loi visant à désigner le mois de novembre Mois de la sensibilisation au don de moelle osseuse.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: The purpose of this bill is to make the month of November in each year Bone Marrow Awareness Month, and I would add that the short title is the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Awareness Month Act.

ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF THE PURCHASING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF CANADA INC. ACT, 2010

Mr. Rinaldi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr35, An Act respecting the Ontario Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that pursuant to standing order 6(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 19, 2010.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1527 to 1532.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 8.

All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Carroll, Aileen	Johnson, Rick	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Dickson, Joe	Moridi, Reza	Wilkinson, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Murray, Glen R.	Zimmer, David
Gerretsen, John	Orazietti, David	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Savoline, Joyce
Bailey, Robert	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Bisson, Gilles	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.	
Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 32; the nays are 13.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

LEONARD REILLY

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Leonard Reilly.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

I'd just like to take this opportunity to welcome a number of family members here today: Lenore Deaville, Mr. Reilly's daughter; Giselle Bursee, his former secretary; Bob and Frances Reilly, Bob being a great-nephew of Leonard's; Don and Peg Eiler, long-time bridge partners and a fellow pilot; Gail Darling, a family friend and a ghostwriter; and Carol Sorjonen, a family friend. Welcome today. I will ensure, at the conclusion of the debate, that copies of the Hansard and a DVD of today's proceedings are sent to you.

The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I apologize; I didn't think we were going first. Nonetheless, let me start.

First of all, on behalf of New Democrats, I want to say to the family of Mr. Leonard Reilly that's here today that none of us in this assembly had the opportunity to serve with him because he was gone in 1975, before any of us got elected to this place.

In researching and talking to somebody you might remember—a guy by the name of Bill Ferrier, who was here back at that time and served with Mr. Reilly—I had a bit of a chat in regard to his time here. It was kind of interesting, because he got elected in a by-election, and I've got to tell you, it was no sweep. He came in here with, I think, 30-some-odd votes. He barely got through the Legislature's front doors, by some 30 votes.

When he got elected here, there was great expectation as far as the role that he would play in the Robarts government. He was a bit of a star himself before he got elected and got here. He was known as a person who was hard-working, just generally; who was well thought of; and who had the gift of the gab, as we say in politics. He was able to speak in a way that most people would envy in this Legislature, and in a way that a lot of people would aspire to in politics or any kind of work where you have to do public speaking. In fact, he was so good that at one point in his life, when he left politics, he decided he was going to start up a school, and the school he was going to start up was one for public speaking. He was so successful that Dale Carnegie tried to scoop him up and get him to work for him and start up schools here in Toronto for the Dale Carnegie course. But he was a person of his own convictions and said, "No, this is something I'm going to do myself."

Back to the time when he got elected: He comes to this place as a very well-known person within the business community, especially the small business community, and he made a mark for himself fairly quickly. What I heard from Bill is that he really got to be known as the person who sort of—how would you say?—sold Mike Harris's line before he ever thought of it, and that was one of common sense when it came to the small business community. He was someone who said that we need to ensure that those people who work hard every day in the small business community have their voice in government, and that government always remember that it can't run over small business in helping larger businesses to run over them, because that's eventually what happens. He became a very effective advocate here in the Legislature for the small business community across Ontario.

There was many a time in this Legislature when he may not have been exactly onside with his own party on some of those issues—never terribly vocal in the sense of trying to embarrass his government, but making sure that he kept them to task and remembering what he was here for, and that was to represent the people that he was elected by, and to do the work that he needed to do as a legislator in order to represent the small business community. So he was known as a person of conviction.

You've got to remember: Back in the time when Leonard was elected, there was no such thing as constituency offices. We're lucky. We get constituency offices that are paid for by the assembly. We get staff who are paid to work for us in our constituency offices. The staff, unfortunately, was the family, who worked in the constituency, who answered the phone every time somebody called and said, "I've got a problem." It wasn't, "Hi, this is the office of the MPP." This was, "Hi, this is Beulah. What can I do for you?" Beulah, from what I am told by Mr. Ferrier, was a person of great—how would you say?—skills. She was not only his best campaign organizer, not only his best—how would you say?—adviser, but she knew how to give him heck when he needed to get heck to keep him straight.

1540

From what I understand, there was great respect between Beulah and Leonard in the time they were together. But he was a constituency person. He understood that if you are going to come to this place with a big margin of 30-some-odd votes and you want to come back to this place, you don't lose yourself within the assembly, and in that important job of being the MPP, you remember that you're a constituency person and you need to do the work that has to be done.

He was the son of people who came here from Ireland and understood what it was to start from humble beginnings, what it was to work as a tradesperson—he was a locksmith prior to coming here—but was somebody who understood that when you get to politics, never forget the people who brought you. That's something that I think is endearing in what I've heard in regard to the conversations about him.

The biggest thing is you guys, the family, and that's what Bill wanted me to pass on. Apparently, from what my understanding was, they had a bit of a kinship in that sense, but the family was important to your father, to your uncle, to your friend, whoever he might be. They understood that everything that happens in this place doesn't matter if, at the end of the day, you don't go home and have your family there with you. If he has any success, it was because of the family.

On behalf of New Democrats and Andrea Horwath, the leader of the New Democratic Party, we want to thank you for the time that he served. We say to you God bless, in his memory.

Mr. Mike Colle: It's certainly my honour to stand here as the present member from Eglinton–Lawrence who had the honour of having Mr. Leonard Mackenzie Reilly elected to the riding of Eglinton, as it was called then. He seems to be quite an amazingly talented individual who really cared a great deal about ordinary people and was a man of great integrity, too. Mr. Reilly published a book called Living the Life of Reilly, so he also had a great sense of humour.

He came from very humble beginnings. He was the 13th of 16 children of Protestant Irish immigrants who ran a grocery store after settling in Toronto. He also, as I said, took a pretty strong stand early on in life when, growing up as a Protestant, he saw bigotry that existed between Catholics and Protestants in Toronto, and he decided to move away from that. He said, "I always prefer to do things to bring people together rather than to separate them." He was a real pioneer in terms of getting people to come together, no matter what their religious faith was. That was pretty hard to do at that time in the city of Toronto.

He was also a man who was of great religious principle. He came from a very strong Anglican background. His favourite saying was, "We never know for what God is preparing us—for what work on Earth—for what work in the hereafter. Our business is to do our work well."

He was also a great supporter of small business, as mentioned. He also undertook an interesting private member's bill in this Legislature, which shows his connection with regular people. There was a big controversy in those days. If you recall, when you bought margarine, there used to be this dumb bubble that you had to squeeze to conform to the rules of the day. So he introduced a private member's bill that got rid of the bubble—it was eventually adopted by the government—and allowed for coloured margarine to be sold in Ontario. What a progressive breakthrough. After this bill was passed—as the member from Timmins–James Bay said, he was elected by 33 votes. The next election I think he won by 6,000 votes, because he demonstrated to people that he understood some of their everyday frustrations with some of the crazy rules that governments have. That's one of his, I think, trademarks: that he really cared about ordinary people.

As mentioned, he fought for small business people. He was a small business person himself, helped found the Reilly Lock Co. I know that in Toronto there is a Reilly Lock Co., but I'm not sure whether it's the same family. But it exists in my riding on, I think, Caledonia. But he was also, again, a entrepreneurial person who built this company with his brothers during the Great Depression. Through that era he survived and the company grew, moved to Yonge Street and became well known; in fact, it's synonymous with locks in Toronto to this day—Reilly Lock. This is another one of his achievements before he got into government.

If you look at the committees he served on when he was in the Legislature, it just goes on for pages and pages. Not only was he a good constituency person, he served on municipal law committees, a committee on education, on health and welfare. He was a very active parliamentarian who did a great deal of work to make Ontario a better place. He obviously represented his constituency well, as has been noted, and was a great supporter of his family—and I'm glad to see that there are members of his family and extended family here today. Really, you have a lot to be proud of.

Sometimes we take unsung heroes like Leonard Reilly for granted. He helped build this great province through his hard work, connection with ordinary people and his sense of a better place. He was a very religious man. He was a dedicated civil servant for the people of Ontario and his constituency and he really loved what he was doing. Again, he was a pioneer in the whole area of public speaking. He founded his own institute of public speaking here in Ontario, in Toronto.

He accomplished a great deal, and I think we're all better for Mr. Reilly, MPP, and the contributions he made to this Legislature and to the city of Toronto, where he served as a councillor, an alderman and an MPP. We thank his family for sharing this wonderful person with us. Again, he has helped make this a better place. Thank you so much.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure and an honour for me to speak on behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus on the occasion of the tribute to Leonard Reilly, who was first elected here in 1962 in a by-election and served until 1975. It's great to see members of the family here today.

Before politics, as has been mentioned, he was a locksmith, taking on a career after high school and learning from an older brother who had opened Reilly Lock on Yonge Street. Wouldn't it be nice to have a locksmith in here today to open the book on some of those government secrets that we keep asking about? If we only had Leonard here today.

As they said, the company eventually grew to over 40 employees and he used his earnings to advance his interest in debating. As has been mentioned, he opened the Reilly Institute of Public Speaking and Personal Development, which gives you an idea of his love for debate and, as has been mentioned, his ability in engaging in that debate.

He first entered political life in 1947, running as an aldermanic candidate, and he won six consecutive elections until he was drawn into provincial politics in a by-election in 1962. As has been said, he won by the slim margin of 35 votes, but in 1963 he won by over 6,000. He won by a bigger margin again in 1967 and in his last election, in 1971, he won by over 10,000 votes, which speaks to, as Gilles talked about, the quality of Leonard Reilly as a constituency man and a servant of the people. He was clearly making his mark in the riding of Eglinton, as he was making his mark in this chamber as well.

He was elected the year before my father, and I remember my father talking about this margarine bill: as

you've all talked about, the little button and the little dye in the button that would colour the margarine. I remember my dad talking about Leonard Reilly and the margarine bill. Look, not many people who serve in this chamber actually ever get a private member's bill passed, so kudos to Leonard Reilly for doing that. He was also made a deputy Speaker by Premier John Robarts in 1966 and became parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Industry and Tourism in October 1972.

In 1975, he left provincial politics. He had this tremendous independent streak in him, which was not uncommon. I know that my father had that streak in him as well. That probably, as Gilles talked about, put him on the wrong side of the issue sometimes with his own Premiers and his own party, but Leonard Reilly did his thinking for himself, made sure that his points were made and his constituents were represented.

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After he left politics, he was made chair of the board of trustees of the Ontario Science Centre, where he served two three-year terms until 1983. He is credited with raising the international profile of the Ontario Science Centre, and oversaw the exhibition China: 7,000 Years of Discovery, that broke all previous attendance records, attracting more than 1.5 million visitors in 1982. So not only was he serving well in this Legislature, but he served well as chair of the Ontario Science Centre.

We talked about his spirituality and his beliefs. He organized the first Ontario Prayer Breakfast in 1970. It is now an annual event, recently celebrating its 41st year on May 12.

He was the child of Protestant Irish immigrants, and his family settled in Toronto and ran a grocery store.

I can understand this, being one of 14 children: Leonard Reilly was one of 16 children. Again, I had to settle for second place.

His wife, Beulah, passed away in 1978. He was the father of Lenore, Lynne and stepson, Nick, and he was predeceased by daughter Lois.

He was a pilot. I don't know if Gilles mentioned that or not. Gilles is a pilot himself, as are my colleagues Norm Miller and Peter Shurman. There may be other pilots; I'm not sure. He loved flight and had his own plane.

I was talking to Lenore earlier—and this is an interesting story. We believe it was back in 1958 when he took off from the airport at Fort Lauderdale and, just after taking off, had engine failure. He radioed the tower. He didn't know exactly what he was going to do. He was looking at the beach and seeing these people, looking at the water—that's not too inviting. He was talking with the control tower. At the end of the day, he was able to manoeuvre his plane. It was March 17, so they must have thought that St. Patrick himself was coming to visit them in Fort Lauderdale. He found a spot on the beach where there was a separation between the crowds, and was able to land his plane on the beach safely. He tried to keep it hidden from his wife and his kids at the time because he didn't want them to worry, but it made the papers anyway.

He continued with that independent streak even at the age of 95, when he went and passed his driver's licence test. He was always looking to ensure that, "If I need to do it by myself, I'm going to find a way to do it."

He loved the time with his family and the cottage in the Kawarthas.

We are honoured to thank his family and his memory for the great service he gave us as a parliamentarian and a humanitarian as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you again to the family and friends who joined us today.

APPOINTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to deal with a government motion without notice or amendment dealing with the reappointment of the Environmental Commissioner for the province of Ontario, and that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak to the motion.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"To the Lieutenant Governor in Council:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the reappointment of Gord Miller as the Environmental Commissioner for the province of Ontario as provided in section 49 of the Environmental Bill of Rights, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act,

"And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith moves that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"To the Lieutenant Governor in Council:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the reappointment of Gord Miller as the Environmental Commissioner for the province of Ontario as provided in section 49 of the Environmental Bill of Rights, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act,

"And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker."

Minister of the Environment.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'm very pleased to be able to speak on the occasion of the reappointment of Gord Miller as our Environmental Commissioner.

Let me just say that the selection process and the unanimous consent is quite a stark departure from those of us that were here 10 years ago when he was first appointed. You may recall there was quite a controversy about that at that time. It seems to me it was immediately before Christmas. But whatever the controversy was at that time, let me just say that I think this is an excellent

reappointment and that the selection committee should be commended for coming up with the unanimous decision that they did in reappointing Gord Miller. There's no doubt in my mind that the committee has made the right decision.

I've had the opportunity to work with Gord, in opposition and in my capacity as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing some time ago, and even more closely since 2007 when I was appointed Minister of the Environment. At Municipal Affairs and Housing, as a matter of fact, he gave us some very good, sound advice with respect to the establishment of the greenbelt, a greenbelt that I believe will be there for generations of Ontarians to enjoy for many, many decades in the future. His sound advice on that was greatly appreciated and respected.

At the Ministry of the Environment, we have valued his advice on climate change, on Lake Simcoe, the quality of the air that we breathe and the water that we drink, and many other issues as well. I've had many formal meetings with him and also some informal meetings with him at various locations, including my office.

Yes, at times he has been tough on us in government, there's no question about it, but he's always been fair in every respect. I think it is good to have an officer of this assembly to look over the various activities of what government's involved with, particularly in this case the whole question of the environment that we all need and want to be the best possible. He holds our feet to the fire and he never lets us forget for one moment our obligations, not only to this generation but to future generations, and that is to protect our environment, the air that we breathe, the water that we drink and the land that we walk upon.

As I mentioned before, he was first sworn in as Environmental Commissioner in January 2000 and was reappointed again in April 2005.

Gord has a very strong science background that has helped him fulfill his role extremely well. Previous to his appointment as Environment Commissioner, he had done some research around the use of constructed wetlands for sewage treatment and aquatic effects of acid precipitation.

He also knows the workings of government very well, having served for 14 years at the Ministry of the Environment, so he certainly knows the Ministry of the Environment inside and out. He served there as scientist, as a manager of training and development, and as a district manager of both the Timmins and North Bay offices of the ministry. I always think that we don't pay tribute enough to all of the people that work at our various district and regional offices. They actually carry out the policies, programs, laws and regulations that we pass in this House, and they actually see it happening on the ground on a continual basis. Gord served in that capacity in both Timmins and North Bay.

We as a government, and I as the Minister of the Environment, look forward each year to his reports, knowing there will be criticisms but also strong advice. They sometimes take a bit of time, but often if you look back at Gord's report you see how he has made a definite impact on the environmental policy in Ontario.

In his 2004-05 report, Planning our Landscape, a key recommendation was for the government to get serious about renewable energy and conservation, and we have done that. I'm proud to say that we've taken significant steps forward through the implementation of the Green Energy Act.

He has also been a champion of biodiversity and protecting species at risk; again, the Endangered Species Act makes Ontario the North American leader in species protection, both at-risk species protection and recovery. Our current state of biodiversity is a result of planning decisions made in the past, and the future will be determined by the decisions we make now.

One of the key responsibilities of the Environmental Commissioner is ensuring that government decisions are made in consultation with the public. His strong belief in the importance of public participation in the environmental decisions is something that I share with Gord.

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A key role of the Environmental Commissioner, and one that he has championed as well, is ensuring adherence with the Environmental Bill of Rights, legislation that ensures our communities are consulted about environmental decisions and that the decisions are made in an open and transparent manner.

We need people like Gord Miller looking out for our environment, and I look forward to Gord continuing to hold our government's feet to the fire as we work together to ensure that our environment is protected, not only for this generation, but for generations to come. We applaud his reappointment.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I too applaud that reappointment of Gord Miller as Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. After going through the interview process—indeed, after watching the comprehensive, accurate and forward-thinking work through the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario office over the last seven years—I think all parties would agree that Gord Miller has long demonstrated a proven ability to balance competing interests and input while looking out for what's best for the future environmental stability of this province. He has maintained that balance with respect to more than just our air, our land and our water, all the while providing a unique environmental perspective, acknowledging the socio-economic challenges we face on a daily basis here in Ontario.

This perspective is constant and unyielding through his annual reports, public speaking, media interviews and a series of other modes of communication and persuasion that, if you will, the ECO employs to ensure government remains aware and vigilant in addressing current and future environmental hurdles. Mr. Miller has proven himself a true advocate for our natural world, our environment, ever bearing in mind the socio-economic as well as political composition of our province.

Gord Miller is also a manager who has succeeded in ensuring that the office of the ECO more than fulfils its

role as the province's independent environmental watchdog, both monitoring and reporting on compliance with the Environmental Bill of Rights and the government's success in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and in achieving greater energy conservation in Ontario.

Given the last few words coming out of his office, I would think that the last line would more accurately be read, "and the government's failure in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and in achieving greater energy conservation in Ontario."

I say that because, as we know, the commissioner has pulled no punches in his criticism of government's failures in areas it boasts progress. I will remind members of this little gem on climate change: "The fact that greenhouse gas emissions are projected to rise between 2014 and 2020 points to a serious deficiency in the government's planning." Serious deficiencies in the government's planning—which brings me to another issue in this Legislature, and it has nothing do with the correct decision—I repeat, the correct decision—and unanimous decision to support reappointing Gordon Miller.

It was just recently that the Premier went on the record not sure about government reappointments, and yet here we are making the, again, correct decision to reappoint Gord Miller. But it begs the question of whether the Premier's problem is not in fact with government reappointments, but reappointments of those he's just simply tired of running from. Government attacks on André Marin, the Ombudsman, are little more than an obvious effort to trade what has been an effective watchdog for a lapdog that will cause less embarrassment to the government.

Let's be clear here: Mr. Marin, Environmental Commissioner Miller and Integrity Commissioner Lynn Morrison were all asked to compete for their jobs when the government decided not to renew their contracts. Only one is left hanging in the wind, only one is watching, and his reputation has been sullied.

While Liberals were partying over the weekend, their insiders were hard at work spinning messages to the media that reported Liberals questioning Marin's expenses. The Liberal leaks also seemed to be aimed at sabotaging the hiring process by disclosing information about the all-party panel tasked with selecting the Ombudsman.

The questionable tactics that seem to be at play here highlight an arrogance of a government that feels it can do whatever it wants. If it doesn't like the results, it changes the rules of the game. The message is simple to government-appointed watchdogs: Do your job, but do it too well and we'll pull your ticket. It's not right, and the people of Ontario deserve better.

In the person of Gord Miller, we've done the right thing. I congratulate you, sir, and I look forward to you continuing to serve Ontario for the next five years in the office of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in the great way that you have served it in the past 10. Thank you very much.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm very pleased to support the reappointment of Mr. Miller. I'm pleased that you're back. I should commend my colleagues Leeanna Pendergast and Toby Barrett, you, Speaker, and Nancy Marling, who was the staff support. I thought the process was professional, thorough and gave the applicants the respect that they deserved. For that, I was very grateful to be part of the process.

Mr. Miller, you're here. You know very well what's coming at this society in terms of climate change, in terms of energy volatility, in terms of all of the challenges that we'll have with respect to water, to our society, to our way of life. You too, sir, have been thorough; you've been professional; you have brought forward analyses and reports that I think have had a tremendous impact in this province—hopefully more impact in the future, but tremendous impact. You've set a standard that I hope all future environmental commissioners will achieve.

I welcome you back. I look forward to your reports. Sometimes your language is a bit too diplomatic for me, as I have said to you. But you always have the facts there, and I can always go back to the facts. Thank you, sir. Welcome back.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to echo all the comments to my good friend Gord Miller, and I just want to remind him of a story that dates back many years—I think it was 1995. He was actually a candidate against me, if you believe it or not, in Cochrane South. I want to say that he was one of the toughest candidates I've had to run against, and I applaud the reappointment, knowing that you're not coming back and running against me in the next election.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members have heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

It's unanimous.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to take this opportunity, Gord, on behalf of the table and the legislative officers, to congratulate you on your reappointment. I look forward to working with you as well and I, like the Minister of the Environment, am conscious of what I said on the record many years ago when you were appointed, and you have certainly proved me wrong as well.

PETITIONS

WATER QUALITY

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, draw the attention of Parliament to the following:

"Whereas North America and the world have been continuously drier, and where life does not exist without water; and

"Whereas the most pristine water with necessary minerals lies in aquifers, for over 10,000 years, and leaching of toxins can occur;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That aquifer water be preserved only for drinking."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Caroline.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^me^ France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury.

"Whereas a company's resumption of production with replacement workers during a legal strike puts undue tensions and divisions on a community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers during a strike."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with page Joshua.

SERVICE CENTRES

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 401 service centres at Mallorytown, Ontario, were closed in September 2009 and 250 jobs were lost; and

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"Whereas the community has identified the need for a staffed full-service tourist kiosk as part of the redevelopment of the Mallorytown service centres; and

"Whereas the completion date for reconstruction of these centres could be delayed past spring 2011; and

"Whereas the reeve and council of Front of Yonge township have passed a resolution giving the government approval of construction 24 hours a day, seven days a week to expedite the project;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Transportation accelerate reconstructions of the Mallorytown service centres based on the local council's wishes and commit to enhanced tourist service improvements at these sites."

I agree with it and I will affix my signature.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^me^ France Gélinas: I have a petition from the people of Timmins–Baie James, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under" certain "conditions...; and

"Whereas," since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the Clerk with page Rhett.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Joe Dickson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians pay more for popular generic drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure and other common health issues than patients in other jurisdictions; and

"Whereas Ontarians deserve fair prescription drug prices so that families and seniors are not charged more than those in other countries; and

"Whereas some members of the opposition have sided with large corporations to preserve the status quo rather than make prescription medications more affordable for Ontario patients by supporting the proposed drug reforms;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians by passing the government's legislation to lower the cost of prescription medications."

I agree with it, I affix my signature hereto and I will pass it to the page.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Bailey: I've got a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's plan to blend the PST with the GST into one 13% harmonized sales tax (HST) represents one of the largest tax hikes in Ontario history, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

"This new tax, which we are calling the DST (Dalton sales tax), will raise the cost of a long list of goods and services not previously subject to provincial sales tax, including electricity; home heating oil and gas at the pump; haircuts; magazines; Internet; home renovations; heating; air-conditioning repairs; accounting, legal and real estate fees; condo fees; new home sales; rents will also go up; minor hockey registration fees will increase; and green fees and gym fees will also be taxed;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government not impose this new tax on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I agree with this and will send it down with Caroline.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontarians pay significantly more money than comparable US states for precisely the same generic drugs purchased at pharmacies for diabetes, cancer treatment, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart conditions and many other types of treatment; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers spend more than half a billion dollars each and every year on so-called professional allowances, which are money paid by generic drug manufacturers to big pharmacy chains to stock their product. This money does not assist patients, and instead pays for shareholder dividends, salaries, benefits, bonuses and overhead expenses; and

"Whereas drug costs are among the fastest-growing parts of Ontario's health care system. Taxpayers' funds should better be invested in improving access to new drugs to consumers and seniors and lowering prices on existing products; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has proposed a more equitable means of compensating community pharmacists for serving clients and will eliminate abuse by big pharmacy chains of rebates provided by manufacturers of drug products;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario and all members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly support Ontario's proposed changes to the regulations governing and assist patients and Ontario seniors with lower drug prices and better access to more new drugs for all Ontarians."

I'm pleased to affix my signature, to support this petition and to give to it page Rhett to carry for me.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed."

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Bill Mauro: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas we currently have no psychiatric emergency service at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to support the creation of a psychiatric emergency service in emergency at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario."

I support this petition and I will put my signature to it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the good folks at the Seaway Valley pharmacy in Prescott.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty $15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the $1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends,

"—increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I'll affix my signature and send it to the table with Joshua.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Ted Arnott: I, too, have a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty $15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the $1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends,

"—increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Joe Dickson: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas professional allowance revenues for generic drugs are not being used to directly benefit patient care and there being evidence of abuse in the system;

"Whereas Ontarians pay far too much for generic drugs because of these professional allowances;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to pursue legislation that will put an end to this flawed system of professional allowances for generic drugs in order to reinvest the savings to the benefit of Ontarians."

I agree with this, attach my signature and I will pass it to Michelle.

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ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

I'm pleased to support this and give to it page Dylan.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's plan to blend the PST with the GST into one 13% harmonized sales tax represents one of the largest tax hikes in Ontario's history, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

"This new tax, which we are calling the DST, will raise the cost of a long list of goods and services not previously subject to provincial sales tax, including, but not excepting: electricity; home heating oil and gas at the pump; haircuts; magazines; home renovations; heating and air-conditioning repairs; accounting, legal and real estate fees; condo fees; new home sales; rents will also increase; minor hockey registration fees will increase; with green fees and gym fees also taxed;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government not impose this new tax on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I agree with this petition and will send it forward with Mary.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty $15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the $1-billion eHealth scandal; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government is now cutting front-line public health care that will:

"—put independent pharmacies at risk;

"—increase out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems; and

"Whereas, less than a year ago, Premier McGuinty supported expanding the responsibilities of pharmacists as a more cost-effective way to shorten wait times and enhance access to care; and

"Whereas the loss of a pharmacy in rural communities will mean an increased dependence on emergency rooms and family doctors, resulting in longer wait times and reduced access to care;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and send it with Joshua.

TAXATION

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Prevent the Growth of the Illegal Tobacco Trade Crisis.

"Whereas the illegal trade of cigarettes already accounts for almost 50% of all cigarettes purchased in the province and illegal products are available at a price that is already much lower than that for legal cigarettes (average $70 for a carton of 200 legal cigarettes versus $10 for 200 cigarettes in a plastic bag); and

"Whereas the HST, effective July 1, 2010, will raise legal tobacco prices by 8%, or another $4 to $7 per carton of 200 cigarettes, making illegal cigarettes even cheaper, and will likely only make the problem of illegal cigarettes worse in the province; and

"Whereas this situation will represent further losses to already suffering law-abiding retailers while only

benefiting the organized crime groups behind the illegal trade;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To prevent the growth of illicit trade by temporarily reducing the provincial tobacco tax to offset the impact of the HST and keep the price of legal tobacco products static until the contraband problem in Ontario is under control."

I affix my name in support.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FAR NORTH ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LE GRAND NORD

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 18, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North / Projet de loi 191, Loi relative à l'aménagement et à la protection du Grand Nord.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I appreciate the ability yet again to get a few words on the record in regard to Bill 191, the Far North planning act. I want to say at the outset, because it needs to be said, that there is not a First Nations community that believes that we shouldn't have a planning system when it comes to development in the Far North. I have not run across any of the communities in my riding, Mr. Gravelle's riding or Mr. Hampton's riding that are saying, "Oh, no, no. We don't want to have any kind of land use planning." In fact, they do.

The second point I want to make is that there is hardly a community that doesn't want some form of development in their community or in their traditional territories so that they're able to benefit from those jobs that could be created by those economic activities, as we see with the Musselwhite project, the former Dome Mines and the De Beers project at the Victor mining project. They understand that development, properly done, with an eye to the environment to make sure that we protect the land, with an eye to the interests of the community so that we protect their interests as a community when it comes to benefits that come back—they are prepared to allow development to go forward, and a planning act is something that is needed.

But here is the rub: If you force a planning regime on First Nations who are not, at this point, ready to be able to—I shouldn't say "ready." They're ready, but they're still struggling in order to try to determine what that planning process should look like. If you impose a provincially designed system by the McGuinty government onto the First Nations, you will have done nothing to, quite frankly, deal with making sure that we have a good planning system in the Far North.

I'll tell you what will happen: If you foist a system onto them that they don't want, it is not going to stop First Nations from saying, "No, our interests are not protected by this act. We get no benefit as far as what this project will bring," or "We don't know what the benefits are because the company won't negotiate with us," or whatever might be the issue. What you will end up with after the planning act is the potential of First Nations saying no to development because the process may not allow them to have the say that they so much want and desire.

We've had the two extremes when it comes to examples in northern Ontario and in the Far North when it comes to development. We see, on the one side, De Beers, who said, in developing the Victor diamond mine, "We will not go forward unless there is a community agreement on an impact benefit agreement that the community is made aware of and that they sanction by way of a vote." When they went through that process—and it took some seven or eight years to go there—there was a vote in the community of Attawapiskat, and 85% of the community accepted the impact benefit agreement that was negotiated by their members and the staff at De Beers.

Is everybody exhilarated and happy about what has happened as far as the De Beers project, the Victor diamond mine? Of course there are people in the community who may not be happy with what the final product was, but the majority were satisfied enough to vote by 85% to allow it to happen.

The point that I want to make—and the other extreme, before I go there, is what has happened with Platinex and KI, where an exploration company went into a community, into their territory, and started doing work without their permission. Therefore, we saw the blockade. We saw them trying to prevent aircraft from landing in the area, on lakes, to be able to do exploration. We saw the court challenge. We saw the provincial government having to—unfortunately, they ended up jailing half of the council, including grandmothers, in regard to those people trying to exercise their rights in protecting the interests of the community.

I want to say right up front that if you think that you can pass an act in this House and do so without the consent of First Nations and think that you've resolved the problem when it comes to planning and development in the Far North, you are very mistaken, because there will be some communities who might buy in, but there are going to be a number of communities, and I would say the majority, who will say, "No, unless there's a planning regime where we have some say about how it's designed and how it protects our interests as First Nations." They may not buy in.

In fact, I've had discussions with people at Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which is the Treaty 9, along with other First Nations across the north, and they are saying to this government, "Do not pass this bill as it stands at second reading. We, as a community of First Nations from across the north and the NAN and Treaty 5 and Treaty 3

areas, want to have the ability to be able to work together amongst our communities to determine what the principles should be and how a planning process should work that meets with our needs as First Nations communities and also meets with the needs of developers in a way that's sustainable to both the economic development, as far as what it means to the community, and to the environment."

I want to say categorically that the government making this arbitrary decision to go forward with the planning act, as it stands—the Far North planning act—is in my estimation an affront to the First Nations and runs against what the Premier has said from the beginning, which is that you want to have a new relationship with our First Nations.

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From where they stand in their communities at Muskrat Dam, Marten Falls, Fort Severn, Peawanuck, Attawapiskat or wherever it might be, when they look at a provincial government that's imposing a Far North planning act without the consent of the First Nations, they see this as the same old same old relationship that federal and provincial governments have had with them and that have led to the absolute poverty we see in those communities.

To the government: Can we end up with a process of planning in the Far North? Absolutely. Will First Nations want to have it? Absolutely. But you need to give them the opportunity to work with each other and with their provincial government to design a process and a planning act that works for them.

You need to understand, there are very basic issues that have to be resolved; for example, who has jurisdiction over territories within NAN. The boundaries between communities such as Fort Severn, Weenusk, Attawapiskat and others are not as clear as people would think they are. They embarked on a process in Fort Severn, in my colleague Howard Hampton's riding, about a year ago, where they met and said, "We will develop a protocol and an understanding that we will resolve those issues of who has which territory so that we can actually deal with a planning act." So the government coming in and imposing a planning act before the First Nations had a chance to resolve those territorial issues is like doing it backwards. At the end of the day, what you're doing is cutting them off at the pass, in the sense of not allowing them to do what needs to be done.

This really has to be said, and you need to understand this, as a government and as members of this Legislature: When you talk about the land to a non-aboriginal person, the sense of that land is very different than it is for an aboriginal person. When you talk to somebody in Toronto or Timmins or wherever it might be about the environment they live in, yes, they're concerned. But First Nations don't identify themselves through institutions as much as we do here and outside of First Nations communities. We identify ourselves through our universities, our schools, our workplace, our family, whatever. First Nations identify themselves through the land. It's all about the land. It's about how they, as individuals, as a family, as a community, as a clan, are able to survive and prosper and grow by the proper utilization of the land they live on—knowing that you will always, every spring, be able to do the goose hunt; that you will always be able to do the fishing; that you will always be able to do the hunting in the fall; that you will always be able to get the firewood you need to keep your home warm. They live off the land in every traditional aspect that we can recognize. When you live in Fort Severn or Attawapiskat, you can't go down to the Eaton Centre to buy a new fur coat or even a parka. You've got to go to the Northern Store, and it's pretty darned expensive—and in a lot of communities, there isn't even a Northern Store. So they utilize the land for everything having to do with subsistence: the ability to feed themselves; the ability to find useful things to do so that, as a people, they can find some pride, some dignity, and they can see themselves as being people who are engaged in their communities. The land is everything.

So when we, as a colonial power—as they see us—all of a sudden come to this Legislature and call a bill for second reading that they've already told you they're opposed to, it's a huge affront. They're saying, "Hang on a second. What's McGuinty up to? You're trying to change the way that we're going to be able to use our traditional rights under treaty when it comes to the utilization of the land, around trapping, around fishing, around hunting, around gathering." They're doing all the things that they've always done when it comes to their traditional land. They're saying, "Listen, we're not opposed to a planning act, but it has to be one in which we are having a major say about what happens."

So, what to do? Just before I go there—I've got a couple of minutes—I want to say one other thing. Be aware: When this bill went into first reading and we sent it out to committee, it was very clear that all who presented to committee—First Nations, the mining industry, forestry, environmentalists—were unanimous in not wanting to pass the act as is, for very different reasons. In the end, what the government has introduced will not provide the assurance the developers want when it comes to process, to allow them to move forward with development. They understand, as mining and forestry companies and others, that they're not going to have the buy-in of the local communities in a flawed process such as is designed in this bill. And First Nations are obviously opposed because they want to be able to benefit. So, understand right from the beginning: You don't have buy-in, and Chief Stan Beardy and other leader across the Far North, from east to west to the very northern parts of Ontario have said to you, "Do not pass this bill at second reading."

So what to do? The first thing we need to do is give First Nations sufficient time to organize themselves to deal with the issues that have to be dealt with in developing a planning act. Second, we have to resource them. We've got to give them the bucks so that they're able to develop the capacity in their communities to

develop what the planning act should look like. You have to allow them to build the capacity necessary to do that very important work.

I've listened to some of my Liberal friends here in the assembly say, "At least if we pass this bill, there will be something there that they can use." I've got to say, my God—listen, I've been around this place long enough to know that's not a solution because they will not buy into it. It means to say that you start right off at the get-go that the First Nations will not co-operate, for the most part, if they don't like the product at the end.

My point is this: For time immemorial the Mushkegowuk Cree and others have lived in the territories that we are now trying to pass this planning act for. For millennia, they have been able to live and subsist off that land without a negative impact on the environment. So why are we in such a rush to pass this bill by the spring so that we can have committee hearings in June, so we can pass by the fall a bill that the First Nations, developers and others aren't going to buy into?

Allow them the time they need to develop an act in co-operation with the provincial government, in co-operation with those who are interested, the environmental movement and others. At the end, you will have a product that will be one that they can buy into and one that they will go forward with and utilize as a tool to do the economic development that so much needs to happen in those communities.

You also have to deal within the planning act—and maybe not in a planning act but in a separate act—with revenue-sharing. You can't allow development to happen in First Nations communities without an ability for them to benefit by some legislative means from the benefits of particular economic development.

We have with us today my good friend Yvan Brousseau, who is the CEO for the town of Kap. Can you imagine in Kapuskasing somebody coming into your municipality and saying, "I'm starting up a big business, it's going to have 600 people working, and we're not going to pay you municipal taxes"? Tembec tried that, but that's a whole other story. They were paying some taxes.

But the point is, we don't allow that in our municipalities now. Why would we allow people to develop without having some ability for First Nations to benefit from the revenue? I don't advocate creating a new tax. That's not what I'm talking about. What I'm saying is, at the very least the province should share the revenue that we receive as a provincial government from those activities through royalties and taxation that we already collect when it comes to those particular economic activities and have a mechanism by law that gives that benefit to the communities so that they can build the infrastructure they need and also deal with the issue of being able to create employment for First Nations members to work in those jobs.

With that, I want to say we will be voting against the Far North Act at second reading, and we urge this government to put the brakes on because First Nations do not support the act as it stands now.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes to respond to the member's comments. I want to begin by making a comment on his remarks about either imposing and/or forcing a planning process on First Nations. We've heard that concern. The bill before the House today includes an amendment that would emphasize the fact that First Nations must initiate the planning process. Ontario cannot impose a community-based land use plan. It is a joint process. I'm not sure we can be much clearer than that.

It's important to note as well that 20 groups have already expressed an interest in this process; at least eight have started. Those eight are in various stages of this process, I would suspect.

On the consultation piece, we heard a little bit I think from this member, some last night as well when we were sitting here till midnight debating this particular bill—it's important to remind people that this piece of legislation travelled after first reading. I'm not sure how often that's happened in this Legislature in its history, how often a bill went out for consultation after first reading. We did that with Bill 191, and I'm quite certain that it's likely that that will occur again after second reading.

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In terms of capacity for land use planning, the minister has included a $30-million fund set aside to help First Nations with this process to build the capacity that's required from their side to arrive at a process that they're fine with, that they think they can work with us on.

I do want to stray a little bit away from the member's comments and address something that was said last night, though, if I can. A member was speaking as if this was somehow something that would potentially get in the way of the Ring of Fire. The Premier has spoken very publicly about his interest in that project. He talked about it at the heritage dinner. We talked about it in the throne speech. He's talked about it in the budget. The suggestion that somehow anything in here is going to get in the way of a large-scale project like that, I must say, is just absolutely absurd. I'm not sure why the member would even imply it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I very much rise in support of my colleague from Timmins–James Bay on the issue of Bill 191.

Certainly, when we had the privilege and honour to govern, I know there were numerous times that we sent out a bill on first reading for committee work.

Some of the aspects that need to be pointed out: As recent as May 5, Grand Chief Stan Beardy sent out a document to the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs strictly stating that they in no way, shape or form support the bill the way it is.

While we were in Sioux Lookout at the committee hearings, we had communities from the First Nations

where, for the first time ever, I heard them specifically state—and I'll be more than happy later on this evening to quote from Hansard—they were willing to go to war over this issue. We're talking about actions here that I've never heard of a precedent before. When I met with Grand Chief Stan Beardy and talked with him, he had no idea that this bill was coming forward, nor any idea of a part of what's taking place.

Let's talk about the planning act. Let's talk about—

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I told him myself in person.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: No, I'm not going to get into that.

Let's talk about the planning area. During the presentations in Sioux Lookout, we had two communities come forward on the planning act.

Mr. Bill Mauro: She told him herself in person.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Now, if you want to listen, you should have been there.

First and foremost—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Very clearly, two First Nations came and made a presentation—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan will come to order.

The member for Oshawa.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Very clearly, two communities came forward—

Interjection.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Speaker, please. I'm trying to have a debate and he's constantly—because he doesn't want to listen to the argument.

Two communities came forward and did a presentation where the planning act overlapped lands, and they didn't include First Nations that were not Treaty 9 or Treaty 5 individuals. This clearly showed that planning act needs a lot more work than what's being put forward in this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I listened to my colleague from Timmins–James Bay, and I think members of the Legislature would be wise to heed his advice because he spends a great deal of time working with and working in First Nation communities.

He knows, as I know, that the First Nation leadership regard this bill as another exercise in neo-colonialism, where someone sitting in an office in Toronto attempts to tell First Nations what is good for them, what is not good for them, how they should run their lives, how they should run their community, what is allowed on their land and what is not allowed. First Nations are decidedly of the view that they alone are competent and capable and authorized to make these decisions.

Like the member from Timmins–James Bay, I've had it pointed out to me by a number of chiefs and councils who say, "How many non-native people live within 100 kilometres or 200 kilometres of our First Nation?" They point to maybe two nurses at the nursing station and perhaps a teacher or two, and that's it. Otherwise, the population is 99.999% First Nations who have lived in the area for thousands and thousands and thousands of years.

As the member for Timmins–James Bay points out, First Nations want to make these decisions themselves. They are not opposed to working with the province, but at the end of the day, they feel, and I feel, that they should have the final decision on these matters.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'm pleased to join the conversation, although I don't have a lot of time to set the record straight. I listened to some of the debate last night and I've listened to some this afternoon and I get very small opportunities to respond to some of what I heard either last night or today—certainly, this afternoon.

The member from Oshawa may have had a conversation with Chief Beardy, that he didn't know anything about this bill coming forward. Well, I personally told him at an airport about three weeks ago, in person. I've called at least 25 chiefs and told them personally that this bill was coming forward. So if they were left with the impression that people didn't know this was coming—they've absolutely known this bill was coming forward.

I've got a few minutes just to address something that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce did recently. They decided to support the Thunder Bay chamber's resolution, which meant that they didn't want to come forward with Bill 191 and they wanted us to get rid of it. I want to correct the record. I think that was a really bad decision. Our government is dedicated to business development and conservation in the Far North. That's why we're moving forward with second reading. It is unusual to have gone out previously, to come back, and to still be asking for input and consultation. We have respect for the north, we have respect for our First Nations, and that's why we're doing it. We're committed to mineral exploration, investments in the Far North and cooperation with our members who live in the Far North, as well as residents.

Far North land use planning will ultimately provide resource industries with needed clarity about how they're going to be able to develop and where. Economic development such as forestry, mining and renewable energy needs to take place in the Far North. They need that sustainability. Their youth are looking for it, their children, their grandchildren. They need those kinds of investments. We want to be part of assisting in that development in a careful, thoughtful way. It's important we protect the past, the present and the future. The Far North Act is going to do that. We want to work with our Far North partners to make that happen.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member Timmins–James Bay has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to thank all members.

I just want to say to the minister: Finally, the cat is out of the bag. This is all about accelerating development in

the Far North. The point that First Nations are trying to make is, yes, they want to have development, but they want a say in how that development is going to happen. If they don't have a say, I can tell you that there will be no development. We're seeing it in Kapuskasing with the development of the Mattagami River project. First Nations there have been protesting on a regular basis in regard to a development that others have agreed on.

So don't think that passing this act is going to accelerate development. What will accelerate development is having an act that the First Nations can buy into and say, "This is our act. We're proud of it and we're going to work with what's there."

To the other point—I want to echo what my friend Mr. Ouellette said—that Grand Chief Stan Beardy and others didn't know anything about it: He's right. I've had the same conversations with Stan Beardy, Stan Louttit and with various chiefs I've run across. I've talked to Elijah Moonias. I've talked to literally dozens of leaders who asked where this came from.

Now we're finding out that the government notification process is meeting somebody on boarding an airplane and saying, "By the way, we're passing legislation." Where is the respect for First Nations, a government-to-government relationship that is supposed to exist, where the crown says, "Let our leadership"—in this case, the Minister of Natural Resources—"sit down with the leadership of First Nations," and do it at a table where there could be meaningful discussion about what is going to take place, so that the minister can properly hear the arguments made by First Nations as to why it's not going forward? To cross somebody at an airport and have a two-minute discussion as you're boarding an aircraft in different directions is not in any way, shape or form consultation that would be accepted under the Supreme Court of Canada, I can guarantee you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: If there is one national tragedy in this country, it is the treatment of First Nations people. There is no greater embarrassment in Canadian history than the way we have treated First Nations.

It's interesting that everyone who was yapping in here a moment ago, who said, "Listen"—there's hardly a member listening. This is the typical kind of attitude. People get up and make speeches about how important this is, but when another perspective they don't like is raised, they turn their backs to the speaker. I've been watching that consistently through this entire debate, and I have sat here and listened to every single person. This was important enough to me; I watched most of it on television last night when I went home.

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Here's the great dilemma: There were two signatories to these treaties. The crown, representing most of us in here, since we do not have a First Nations or Métis person that I am aware of, save Mr. Levac—there may be others who have never self-identified. We've exercised all of our treaty rights. We built dams, we farmed land, we built cities and we mined resources. We have exercised our treaty rights. We never speak about the Europeans' tradition of exercising those treaty rights, but we have. This Legislature, our laws, our zoning, our banking are all our exercises, as a colonial power, in doing that.

First Nations people have hardly been able to exercise any of the treaty rights they've won. I have heard the politically correct discussions from people who describe themselves as being to my left, over and over again, that until things are totally politically correct and perfect, we're not allowed to move ahead. We have created such a fear and we have so abnormalized First Nations people that we don't even know how to sit down and have a conversation to move things forward. My mother said to me when I was growing up, "Glen, the enemy of good is perfect." If we're waiting for the perfect solution and we're going to wait for 20 years to consult, it will be too late.

When I left the mayor's office in Winnipeg—which has been the butt of some jokes around here—I took one thing with me when I walked out the door: It was an eagle feather. If any of you understand what it means to receive an eagle feather as a white person, it's highly unusual. I got that because of a very similar situation to this. Land treaty rights were about to be settled and people were looking for a formula in which those land treaty rights could have been exercised within cities and within towns. After what was a very difficult and very divisive issue, in which some First Nations leaders were on one side and others were on the other side, we finally moved it forward.

I want to point out that there are 20 First Nations communities that are already involved in this process, with eight of them well involved in it. Is it unanimous? No. The amendments in the legislation—I went through it in seven different places—commit the Ontario government to not act alone. The Ontario government can only act when it has a First Nation partner. Neither the Ontario government nor anyone else can initiate a plan. Only a First Nation community can initiate a plan. That's more power than local municipalities have over land use; we can force them. We make no such commitment to even the city of Toronto or the city of St. Catharines or Cornwall. So it's really about trust.

It was interesting, because I came here in a by-election and I ran on four things, one of which was to start to deal with the issue of First Nations people and Métis people in the city of Toronto, which is home to the largest numbers. None of the other parties' candidates in a single debate raised the issue of First Nations. None of the other parties' candidates even acknowledged they existed. Even when the debate occurred, they did not participate.

It's easy to run on First Nations in the north, where people are powerful, but it's long overdue that we have it here, because you cannot disconnect one from the other. The reason Toronto is a financial capital is because of mining. Toronto would not be here; all those folks who go home from work to Rosedale every day would not have jobs if we did not have the strongest mining finance centre, really, in North America.

The movement of First Nations and Métis people into the city has happened without the movement of capital. I hear from my friends in the NDP that simply because this planning regime doesn't anticipate economic benefit, we shouldn't go forward with it. I would invite them to go to Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which have the exact same legal framework, and look at the 22 urban reserves, at the development partnerships that have occurred. They all occurred on the power of First Nations people to have a system in which they can define and determine land use, because that's the foundation of wealth and that gives them the leverage. It doesn't take more than a couple of functioning brain cells and a little imagination to figure out how to put that together, and most of the First Nations people I know in northwestern Ontario, because I've dealt with some of them and I've signed agreements with some of them, understand that.

Is this perfect? No. Is this third reading? No. Is this going to committee? No. My friend from Thunder Bay–Atikokan made a point. He's disturbed, and I heard comments from other northern members who are in opposition, not because of First Nations but because of the lack of empathy and understanding that some people in chambers of commerce have for the importance of this.

North of the undertaking, the kinds of development that would be allowed are conditional on First Nations' ability. In addition to the rights that First Nations already have, this puts in place some powerful additional tools. It creates a balance between protecting the boreal forest on a very significant scale, and we've got to be concerned about that. An environmental cataclysm is facing us.

We're having silly conversations about people misrepresenting other people's positions on the carbon tax. People should go and read the National Round Table, a report which I co-authored with Jim Flaherty's chief of staff. Not one member, I bet, has read that. It speaks to a long-term carbon pricing policy and it measures the GDP impacts of the different types of choices we should make. All of us in this country should be literate about that, because inaction on free carbon has a devastating impact five, 10, 15 years out on the Ontario economy. We need to have a measured and intelligent conversation, and it involves First Nations, because the vastness of the lungs of this continent, the trees and the boreal forest that preserve the biodiversity, of which we will be losing one third of those species within the next 40 years in this province—we've already lost half the population of our 20 most common bird species. We lose 40% of our bee population every year. These are the pollinating species important to our wine industry, important to every farmer in this province, and they are tied as much into the north as they are into the rural. If we don't understand this—my friend David Crombie says, "Everything is connected to everything else." A member from Toronto Centre or St. Catharines or Cornwall should be as concerned about this bill because it affects our banking system; it affects our mining system; it affects the sustainability of the species on which our farmers depend.

I'm very proud to be a Liberal, and I'm very proud to stand with my friends in the north here because this party does not talk about a Toronto mentality. You will never hear a Liberal talking about a Toronto mentality. I care about the people in Owen Sound. I care about the people in Thunder Bay. I have worked for years with Anne Krassilowsky, the mayor of Dryden. We try to stretch ourselves, which means that it's harder to get elected in Chatham–Kent if you have to stand up and defend gender reassignment surgery. It is harder to get elected in downtown Toronto when you talk about tax breaks for northerners that people in low-income parts of Regent Park don't get. But it's a harder road when you stand up for the whole province.

I've had enough jokes in my life about where I've come from. I've lived in five Canadian cities. I am proud to be a Canadian. It makes me no less a Torontonian. It makes me no less someone from Ottawa. If I am not as much a person from Dryden as I am from Cornwall, then I don't belong in this House; I don't. We just take it for granted that we do.

What does this do? This legislation is modest. It creates a partnership between First Nations that most people I've talked to—and I've met with Stan Beardy. He has my phone number. Before I was elected, he was one of the first people I met with. Twice I sat in a restaurant with him and spent two hours listening to his concerns. I don't need lectures from anybody. The minister has spent a lot more time than simply running into Stan Beardy in an airport, and to demean people's relationships in that way is just not fair. I have met with every First Nations organization three or four times. We need an urban First Nations strategy and we need a northern and remote First Nations strategy and all that this does.

I have heard every argument against moving forward. Very few of them make sense. There's nothing that's being shoved down anyone's throat. No one's power is being taken away. None of this can move forward without the consent of the First Nations. Yes, I'm sure there are frontier issues and border issues to be resolved. But my name in Cree means "one who gathers people." That was given to me by the Cree elders of northwestern Ontario and Manitoba, and I've always cherished that. If you've ever got a spirit name it means you're on a different path. You accept to walk the red path.

1700

Since that happened, I've never felt alone in my life. I have consulted an elder on a regular basis. I have an elder in Toronto and I still, because he's a dear friend, have an elder in Manitoba. And I talk to these people all the time. There's very few decisions I make in my life without thinking about that. It hasn't diminished my faith as a Christian or my identity as an Irish Canadian, or anything like that. In fact, it has strengthened and given me perspective.

I agree with my friend from Timmins–James Bay, because when he talks about there being a very different view that First Nations have—that the land is more than just an address, that it's part of the fabric and the iden-

tity—and that zoning almost, in this kind of land use planning, seems absurd in some ways to people, he's quite right. Where I disagree with him is that somehow people in Toronto don't understand that. I represent more First Nations people than almost anyone else except maybe the member from Kenora–Rainy River, and I bet we give each other a run for our money on that one. And it is as important for each of us to be mindful of those constituents.

It would be harder to—in the streets of Toronto 25% of homeless people are aboriginal. The dropout rate for aboriginal people is 44%. This government is spending $26 million in colleges in Toronto and in urban southern Ontario specifically to improve the conditions and environment for First Nations and Métis people. And we're spending $45 million in northern Ontario right now to support and increase the skill levels and competencies of First Nations people so they can better participate in these more North American, commercial, Eurocentric processes, which is the nature of the global economy, and the struggle to maintain identity and culture and interface with an idea of an economy based on private property, which is the exact opposite of how they have lived for 8,000 years.

It takes courage to stand up and do those things, and that's why I am proud to stand beside my Premier and behind my Premier on these issues. Because he isn't waiting for "perfect" to act. He is not a coward. He is a decent, gentle, kind man who would give anyone the time of day. I don't know anyone who's met the Premier who has ever found him inaccessible, not down to earth or out of touch with the reality of the diversity of this province. We do a disservice to that.

I was talking about my friend Ms. Munro—I apologize; I can't remember your constituency—who gave a speech the other day that I was really impressed with because it was thoughtful and intelligent. We deserve to respect each other's brains a little bit more around here. So why don't we take this as a challenge? It's going back to committee. There's a commitment in the notes I've got that we'd like to go to the north with it, and take this as not holding it up to have to be perfection to achieve, but try to look at this as a great opportunity to enable new relationships, to enable new opportunities. The risks here are so low. The consequences of not acting—half of the First Nations people in Ontario are under the age of 25.

Our commitment to education, to day-long learning and to child care is that there is nothing this government values more than children. There is no group of children that has been so forgotten as First Nations children. We may have five or 10 years to get this right, because as that young group of First Nations and Métis kids grows up in our largest cities and our most remote communities, if we are not able to start to offer them something better than they were offered five, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40 years ago, then we have fundamentally failed. Because you cannot separate the future of any community from the conditions that young aboriginal people are growing up with. All of us have been in power, and I don't think you can look back at a government in Ontario or in Canada in 50 years that should be able to hold its head up high. Maybe if we all had a little more humility, maybe if we put those children first a little bit more, they won't have to grow up with the racism, the bigotry, the collapsed economies and the chemical dependency that did that.

You know, we always think that government should do it. I was a foster parent. I worked with street kids, most of them aboriginal kids unfortunately, because they were disproportionately represented on our streets and in our prisons. And in complete frustration, I started taking kids into my home and adopting them and fostering them. I learned more from those young children with broken hearts and fragile senses of trust than I've learned in my life. It makes sitting in a political Legislature sometimes painfully hard, that we use our words in such a cavalier manner, that we get so involved in such small points of procedure—and we're all guilty of it. It would be nice that on something like this, which really has less to do about land use and about power, but more simply about the leaders in the north, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, starting to have some ability, some machinery and some local power that people in large cities in the south have had for so long, to determine the future of their community and to set conditions for investment. If they use the kinds of things that are available through federal legislation that Ontario governments past have signed and that allow them to enter into development agreements and partnerships and settle treaty rights, we have a huge opportunity.

Is this solving all problems? I know there will be speakers who will get up after me and point out the shortcomings of the bill. But are we going to be worse off if we pass this or better off? I think we're going to be substantially better off. I've worked in environment locally and local government, with First Nations, with band councils, with a lot less machinery and a lot less ability than is offered in this bill, with much more compromise legislation than this and done a lot. I have a great amount of faith in Lynn Peterson, in Anne Krassilowsky, in Stan Beardy, in the brilliant leadership that we have in northern Ontario.

It's not just this. We have the northern growth plan, which we've been consulting about for 10 years. I've been up to Thunder Bay. I've given seven keynote addresses. I have probably spent 18 weeks just in communities like Sioux Lookout over the last 10 years, when I was mayor of Winnipeg and with the Canadian Urban Institute, listening and helping folks on community economic development plans. From Sioux Lookout to Thunder Bay I have seen some pretty exciting, brilliant people come forward with some brilliant ideas who are just looking for a mechanism. I phoned a lot of those folks over the last week as this bill came forward because it was new to me. I wasn't here when it was brought in. It's an older piece of legislation. When I went through it and asked questions I got a good sense of the concerns—which I think I would like to bring forward at some time because there were some concerns—but the overwhelming feeling was, "This is something we can work with." You don't, in the city, ask people to wait for

perfect to get anything done. This is good: "Let's go forward." That, to me, is important.

I also have to say I know Mike Gravelle. I know Bill Mauro. I have a lot of regard for Gilles Bisson. I know Howard Hampton, and he and I sat and worked on phone banks together in our youth. I don't think these people have anything other than honourable intentions. I heard Mr. Ouellette. I think his concerns are heartfelt, sincere and thoughtful. But I haven't heard a case today that tells me this isn't a positive step forward.

I've met too many children who don't have the luxury of two or three years for this government to act so that young people in that community can grow up with some hope. Being lifted out of poverty isn't just about having resources and power; it's about having choices. I think one of the other problems with First Nations folks is that they've been robbed of choices. Even if you have money, if you do not have choices, you are still poor. There's probably no group of people in our society that have fewer choices right now than young aboriginal folks.

I have seen and been on so many reserves where there is no economy, where almost no one gets through high school, where chemical dependency rates are through the roof, where levels of HIV and AIDS are at levels that are absolutely staggering, and I've never, as a Canadian, ever walked away from those experiences feeling proud.

It was one of the reasons I wanted to come to this Legislature: because I live in a downtown neighbourhood. I've stepped across, around, and handed money out to too many First Nations people who I know are there not just because of poverty but because of a lack of choice. While our banks are well connected to our mines in the north, our hope and our hearts are not well enough connected to the First Nations children in these communities, whether they're remote or whether they're down the street. Until we start to see past what makes us different and see these experiences through common human eyes, we will never move forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to respond to the member for Toronto Centre who gave an impassioned speech about Bill 191. He initially talked about the fact that he didn't think anybody in the Legislature was listening to him. As a matter of fact, I think many members of the Legislature were listening to him from all sides of House—certainly on our side.

1710

He followed up on the comment that was made earlier in debate by the Minister of Natural Resources that she had informed the grand chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Stan Beardy, at the airport that Bill 191 was coming. I guess she would call that consultation.

The member for Toronto Centre talked about how he sat down on a number of occasions with Chief Stan Beardy and talked to him at some length about the issues that they face in the north. I'm not sure if the member is aware, but Chief Stan Beardy wrote the Premier on May 5 and outlined why he's opposed to Bill 191. He says:

"As Bill 191 continues to be considered for second reading in session 2, Parliament 39 in the Ontario Legislative Assembly, the First Nations in NAN would like to remind you and other members of Parliament that they oppose the bill as it is currently written."

He goes on and on. It's a three-page letter; it's well written.

"The NAN First Nations continue to oppose the bill as it is written since a number of First Nations proposed and put forward amendments that have gone unheeded. In particular, proposals with respect to ensuring the bill contains language and mechanisms to support First Nations jurisdiction and title, and final say in land use decisions, along with the ability of the bill to provide multi-year and multi-million-dollar funding for land use planning work at the local level, with funds to go through First Nations and/or an arm's-length board, depending on the wish of the communities. NAN First Nations will not provide their free, prior and informed consent prior until these concerns have been addressed."

He continues on and on. I would commend the member and recommend to him that he read this letter, because he indicated he hasn't heard any reason to oppose the bill. Certainly, Stan Beardy has given him some. If the members pay tribute to Stan Beardy, they should listen to him.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: The member for Toronto Centre may have thought I wasn't listening to his speech but I, in fact, was listening. I only want to say to him—he said he found no reason why this bill should not move forward. I can think of a very good reason. If the government truly has a relationship of respect with First Nations, then it would seem to me that a first principle of that relationship of respect is that you listen to what First Nations are saying.

The grand chief of Nishnawbe Aski Nation could not be clearer. He says in his letter:

"The First Nations in NAN would like to remind you and other members of Parliament that they oppose the bill as it is currently written.

"NAN First Nations have been consistent in their opposition to the bill since it was first read and carried in June 2, 2009. NAN First Nations continue to oppose the bill even though the Standing Committee on General Government reviewed it and made amendments in October 22, 2009.

"The NAN First Nations have passed resolution 10/22 ... demanding that the bill be deferred...."

Now, either the McGuinty government has a relationship of respect with First Nations or it doesn't. If it, indeed, has this relationship of respect with First Nations that it claims—I do not show respect to someone by ignoring their very explicit communication to me. NAN First Nations see fundamental problems with the process this government has followed and see fundamental problems with what is enshrined in this bill. I wish the government would listen.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments.

Mr. David Orazietti: I'm pleased to comment on the remarks by the member from Toronto Centre. I appreciate hearing his comments on this bill, his support for the bill and his very eloquent presentation, as well as his perspective. I think his experience with First Nations and as a community leader in a number of different capacities speak well to this bill.

I want to say to members opposite, are we going to continue to ignore development in the Far North, or are we going to work with our First Nations and develop sustainable land use plans in the Far North, so that the people of the Far North can participate more fully in the benefits of Ontario's economy? The members opposite would like to ignore this, brush it under the carpet, so to speak, and not deal with this issue. This is a challenging issue. The reality is that there is development taking place in the north today.

There are 24,000 people spread across a huge part of this province, about 42% of the entire land mass of Ontario. We are committing $30 million over three years toward land use planning. We're also committing $45 million toward training for our First Nations people.

I had the opportunity to go to the De Beers diamond mine site and talk first-hand to some of those First Nations individuals who are benefiting from funding through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and from the development that is taking place in that community so they can succeed as individuals and have a better quality of life.

The members opposite want to ignore this issue. We are dealing with this issue, and we are working with First Nations in northern Ontario to ensure that we get this right. That's why this bill is going out for consultation again. It's almost unheard of that it goes out for consultation twice, but that's what we're doing because we want to make sure we get this bill right.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Oshawa.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I very much appreciate the comments made by the member from Toronto Centre. In his closing remarks, he referred to "common human eyes." Some of the difficulty is that many of the members here don't necessarily have a full understanding of what First Nations represent.

Our family came across in 1604. My family has Métis status. My spirit animal is the great horned owl. I can tell you all sorts of things. But the difficulty is the individuals in this room don't have a good sense of what takes place in a First Nations community.

There is a substantial difference between the individuals of the First Nations here in southern Ontario and those in the north. Certainly the members from the north gain a much broader perspective of what takes place here, but the mindset is that Toronto is deciding what's going to take place in the north once again.

You have to spend time on the land with them to gain a full understanding and perspective of how things unfold in those communities. There are so many things that take place.

The member said, "How are we going to move forward?" because of the dependency and abuse and all the other aspects. I don't know necessarily how moving forward with this legislation will actually change many of those perspectives for the First Nations community. Yes, there's a belief in southern Ontario that if we create jobs and move forward with development, it's going to happen. That's not necessarily so.

The First Nations communities in the north believe that the land has held these aspects, whether it's mining or forestry, for generations and will continue to be there for generations to come, but they want to move forward in a way that brings them to the table with a full perspective. The concern as brought forward by Grand Chief Stan Beardy when I spoke with him—and the minister mentioned meeting with Grand Chief Stan Beardy three weeks ago, yet the statement was only two weeks ago from Grand Chief Stan Beardy—that those aspects that are in the land will be there for generations. We just need to make sure we get it right for future generations as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member from Toronto Centre, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I do take the comments of my friends from Kenora–Rainy River and Oshawa very seriously. However, I generally agree with my friend from Sault Ste. Marie, because our responsibility as a government isn't primarily to the chiefs, no more than it's primarily to the mayors or even to heads of state, because what we're talking about are separate nations. We're talking about a relationship between the crown and that. We have a relationship and a contract that goes beyond that, and it goes beyond that to children, because even First Nation leaders fail their children.

I have had two experiences. A young man named David Walker, who I was working with on the streets, was from a reserve in northwestern Ontario. One day when I saw him, he was smiling, but I got a phone call two hours later that he was found hanging from a banister in his apartment building. Another young man named Charlie, who went home to his First Nations reserve, was beaten to death with baseball bats at age 14 by a bunch of people who had had too much to drink, so much so that the life of this young man was considered worthless.

I am to a point where our first contract is not with the older generation or the people who hold elected office here or anywhere else. My most important responsibility is to the children of this province, who seem to get forgotten in land rights and treaties. That's where my contract is. That's where my respect is first placed. Secondly, it's placed with Grand Chief Beardy.

I did not get the pleasure of that letter. I will read it and I will sit down with Grand Chief Beardy again. I've always been guided—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

1720

Mr. Ted Arnott: On a point of order, Speaker: Could you advise if there is a quorum present in the House at the moment?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is a quorum present?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): A quorum is not present, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): A quorum is now present.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Then the member had better get here quickly.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to make a few comments on Bill 191, the Far North planning and protection act.

I want to begin by looking at some of the background to this bill. I think it's important for people to recognize that it was introduced in June of last year by the former minister. During the summer, there were consultations organized on this bill. A number of the government members have referred to the fact that the bill went out for consultation after first reading. Certainly, it is a departure. I think that it's a very important departure, actually, to take bills out after first reading. As a member of the previous government, we did that as well. It certainly allows for a greater consultation process. It seems to me that with a bill of this importance, it was the right thing for the government to take it out after first reading.

Quite frankly, I have to say as well that the fact that there was nothing done on this bill—it wasn't called for second reading, to be more accurate, until now. Many people thought that there were many lessons learned from the consultation process that took place and that this bill would require more work than what had been done last summer.

I want to talk for a minute about the enormity of the task. All of us need to think about the amount of land we're talking about, the area we're talking about. We're talking about nearly half the size of Ontario. I know that there are many who have not spent much time north of Highway 7 or think that if they've gone to Muskoka, they've gone north. It's quite a demonstration of the magnitude of this undertaking when you're looking at an area under discussion that represents almost half the province.

Not only is there the geographic size, but also the fact that there are many, many varied interests. The one that has taken the focus, I think appropriately, is that of the First Nations. Clearly, if we want to talk about the interests, this would be the group that would have the greatest interest in any kind of discussion and ultimate legislation. But there are many others. We know that the government consulted with environmentalists, who also were very active and vigorous in the presentations of their point of view.

I think we also need to look at the various groups, which I want to call the communities of interest, that are positioned around the area under discussion: the small businesses, the people who have provided hunting, fishing, trapping and tourism, who have lived there for generations, who are very important in terms of looking at this bill, which is planning and protection. Then there are the more significant, in economic terms, in terms of the 21st century, if you like: the mining and forestry interests. So you have a huge range of very complex and, on the one hand, intertwined interests, and at the same time very disparate interests. That's something, in the government's mind, in terms of this undertaking, that is clearly at the base of the problem of this bill reappearing for discussion here for second reading.

I think for a moment of my own situation in the communities that I represent, where a great deal of growth is taking place. When this government passed the Greenbelt Act, it created a band through part of the GTA. One of the outcomes of that was that, of course, by freezing that land, it simply meant that the development leapfrogged into the area of south Simcoe county that I now represent. When I think of the complexities in my communities on the issues of planning, it serves to show how difficult it is for people who are far more a community, in terms of not-disparate interests, in looking at planning and protection, where there are concerns raised all the time about official plans and things like that.

Then I try to take that principle of planning and impose it onto an area such as this bill contemplates. Truly, I think it is really quite mind-boggling to think that in the course of a few opportunities for public hearings, you're going to have all the answers, you're going to be able to say, "We've consulted. Everybody is happy. Everybody is fine with this." As I say, when I look at the complexities in my own riding, they're of a relatively small proportion, an infinitesimal proportion, in comparison to the contemplation of this act.

We know that, for instance, there isn't even accurate mapping; that there aren't set-up boundaries that people can agree on or have been of interest to them. We know that there are competing interests—there are fundamental competing interests. We know that there is an economic vision that the government has. I'm not quite sure exactly to what degree that is shared by the people in the area.

I look at the other aspect that gives a bit of indication of the enormous proportion of the issue that this bill contemplates. In the act, it provides for the minister, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to issue policy statements relating to the following matters in the Far North, and there is a significant list of things here. I think it's important to lay them out because it gives you a sense of the enormity of this bill. Cultural and heritage values is one; ecological systems, processes and functions, including the storage and sequestration of carbon—again, we can go from one area to a very different area; the interconnectedness of protected areas; biological diversity; areas of natural resource value for

potential economic development; electricity transmission, roads and other infrastructure; tourism; and other matters the minister considers are matters of provincial interest to land use planning.

1730

When I think of the policy statements that the province has and the degree to which consultation took place on them—the amount of time that was spent wordsmithing things like those provincial policy statements—and then we're allowing, in this bill, that the minister is going to issue these policy statements without any regard for what might be the importance of consultation, it seems to me that there's no recognition of the complexity of this undertaking.

We've heard from several speakers on the position taken by Grand Chief Beardy. I think it's important, regardless of what the minister has said—since this letter is dated May 5—that they oppose the bill as it is currently written.

I know that the parliamentary assistant has talked about the money that they're going to spend on consultation and training and setting up their $3 million in funding for community engagement, but I still feel that this doesn't accept the fundamental issues of the opposition to the bill. It's really interesting, because there are others, of course—although I have spoken about the First Nations—who are very unhappy with the lack of consultation: principal stakeholder groups, such as the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Ontario Fur Managers Federation and other outdoor organizations.

It's interesting, too, because some months ago, when this bill was first being given public hearings, Terence Corcoran from the Financial Post said that Ontario—this government—was "Canada's worst government." This was in reference to Bill 173, the Mining Amendment Act, and Bill 191, the Far North Act. His quote here is very significant, and if there was ever an argument for slowing down the process and going back to the drawing board, I think he has identified it. He says, "What these two bills actually do, however, is trample on everybody's property rights, from First Nation rights to the rights of cottage owners caught in the murky legislation that sets out mineral rights across the province."

I think that when you take together the opposition to this bill in its present form by numerous stakeholders, representing a huge variety of people that have a stake in how this turns out, then I would say that there is a strong case for going back to the drawing board and, certainly, deferring decisions made on the bill at this point.

With that, I would move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mrs. Munro has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1734 to 1804.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

Take your seats, please.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 6; the nays are 32.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): It being past 6 of the clock and pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Nepean–Carleton has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given yesterday by the Premier. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant may have up to five minutes to reply.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: At the outset, I'd like to acknowledge the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, who was kind enough to change his travel plans today to accommodate this. I do appreciate it. I hold him in the highest respect and I thank him very much.

This late show is arising from a question yesterday that I put to the Premier about a very serious concern the Progressive Conservative caucus has. It has been very clear that we have concerns with the Working Families Coalition and its closeness with the McGuinty Liberals.

It would appear that the sole purpose of Working Families is to help the Liberals ensure that the Ontario PCs do not form government. In both the 2003 and 2007 provincial elections, Working Families ran attack ads targeting Ontario Progressive Conservative candidates. Several people working with the Working Families Coalition have close ties to the McGuinty Liberal government. Don Guy was the Premier's chief of staff, his favourite pollster and director of the Liberals' last two election campaigns; Marcel Wieder owns Arrow Communications and Policomm, two ad firms that worked for both the Liberals and Working Families, sometimes at the exact same time; and Patrick Dillon is the chief spokesman for Working Families and has been appointed by the Premier to not one, not two, but three taxpayer-funded boards at exactly the same time.

Yesterday in question period, I asked the Premier to explain this alliance with Dillon, Wieder, Guy and Working Families. I did so because no one explained a secret meeting in the ministerial boardroom of then-Liberal campaign chair and then-Liberal Finance Minister Greg Sorbara with the brain trust of Working Families, including Patrick Dillon. Mr. Dillon would not speak to us about that yesterday, and he had an oppor-

tunity to at the government agencies committee, which met yesterday to review this latest plum appointment. He refused to take an oath, he was evasive, he was combative and he said nothing about the $7 million he and Working Families spent on anti-PC attack ads. He said that he did not recall the June 2007 meeting in the ministerial boardroom, and I provided a copy of Mr. Sorbara's calendar for that day.

I asked the Premier why no minutes were taken of a meeting in a government boardroom during government time. The Premier did not deny the meeting occurred, he did not say that the meeting was for government business and he did not explain why notepads were put away for the meeting between Working Families and the Liberal campaign chair. It was not his first opportunity to deny that the Liberals worked out a deal with the Working Families Coalition to break election advertising limits in the boardroom on that day. The Premier hasn't denied it, he won't deny it and it leads to the question, why? But instead of answering, the Premier spoke about the fight he has picked with small independent pharmacies.

I asked a supplementary question about Don Guy and Marcel Wieder, Liberal insiders who simultaneously worked on ads for the Liberal campaign and the Working Families Coalition in the 2007 election. I asked Mr. Dillon and then the Premier to explain what should have been a conflict of interest. I pointed to $29 million of public money Working Families, Wieder and Don Guy received after helping Working Families put $7 million of ads together that helped the Liberal Party.

Since Mr. Dillon refused to answer for his part, I asked the Premier to come before a legislative committee and, under oath, give us a straight answer about the deal struck between Working Families and his senior Liberal campaign team.

There is no issue more pressing than the protection of our democratic institutions from even the appearance of taint.

There are urgent questions about how the McGuinty Liberals and the Working Families Coalition have a deal to double their advertising budgets. These are urgent questions about $29 million in public funds going to a group from the party whose election fortunes benefited from it. But the Premier didn't answer any of those questions. He offered unrelated policy matters.

The people of Ontario deserve better. They deserve to know why the McGuinty Liberals are working hand in glove with Working Families, and they deserve to know why their money is going toward Working Families.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for affording me the opportunity today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The parliamentary assistant to the Premier.

Mr. David Ramsay: I'm pleased to get up today and to talk about the overriding issues here that relate to the issues that the member is talking about. What we're talking about are areas of the College of Trades, apprenticeships and the importance of skilled labour in Ontario and the—I would say—looming skills shortage that we have here in the province.

We have more than 500,000 Ontarians who work in trades, which is a vital part of our economy in this province. We are facing a shortage of skilled workers. That's why we've taken action to get more people involved in the skilled trades apprenticeship programs. As a result, we now have 60,000 more apprentices since 2003; 120,000 apprentices are learning a trade today.

We established the College of Trades to modernize the apprenticeship and trades system to encourage more people to join trades. We all have to do that, as parents and grandparents, encourage our children to look at entering a trade.

The college will regulate the trades, just as the teachers, doctors and nurses have their own regulatory colleges. The budget for 2009 is $50 million annually to enhance the co-operative education and apprenticeship training tax credit. We have an apprenticeship training tax credit that is the most generous in Canada to encourage business to hire apprentices—up to $10,000 per apprentice per year. In the 2008 budget was $75 million for further expansion of the apprenticeship program.

Ratios is a big issue when it comes to apprenticeship, so we've worked with industry partners to set the ratios. We have adjusted eight times, based on advice since 2003; the previous government, zero times did they adjust that.

We ensure that all workers are safe. That's a top priority of this government.

At the end, I would like to talk about Pat Dillon because I know that's an issue that is important to the member. What's interesting about Pat Dillon is that all three previous governments have appointed Pat Dillon, because of his expertise, to various advisory bodies: the Ontario Construction Secretariat, created by the NDP in 1993—he was appointed by the Bob Rae government of the day; the WSIB, appointed by former PC labour minister Elizabeth Witmer in 1996, again because of expertise; Corrections Canada advisory board, a federal board under the Harper government, again because of his expertise.

As we all know, Pat began his career in the industry almost 50 years ago as an apprentice electrician. He's the director of the Construction Safety Association of Ontario, a member of the Construction Sector Council of Canada and business manager and secretary-treasurer of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario. That council represents 150,000 apprentices and tradespeople. He is without doubt an absolutely qualified person, and governments under all three different parties have appreciated that and appointed him to very important positions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1815 to 1845.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Wednesday 19 May 2010

Mercredi 19 mai 2010

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 19 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 19 mai 2010

The House recessed from 1815 to 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 19, 2010 on the motion for time allocation on Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes / Projet de loi 21, Loi réglementant les maisons de retraite.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: I guess I'll start off by asking why this government is yet again using the heavy hammer of time allocation to end all-party discussion on amendments to this bill. Time allocation ensures that only the government's views will become law and not those of many groups and individuals who took the time to study the bill and provide their suggestions. We have to ask what the real reason is for the government to be closing down serious discussion and debate. Why do they believe that the opposition party amendments to their legislation are not valid or worthy of consideration? That is the upshot of a time allocation motion: the shutting down of opposition debate—often the only way people get their voices heard by the government.

The government would argue that somehow or other the world is going to come to an end if they don't move time allocation on the clause-by-clause debate, which is simply not true. Taking the time to have full discussion of amendments in an open and fair manner does not seem to be part of the government's plans. It appears to be, "My way or the highway," something that should cause Ontarians to pause and reflect on the real reasons behind this. I am sure the government would have us believe that they must do this to get the bill into law to protect our most vulnerable citizens. The reality is that this bill will do nothing of the sort. It will ensure that owners of retirement homes can control their industry without the real oversight that should be expected by all Ontarians. There might be a suggestion that somehow or other time allocation is about the efficiency of disposition of business. If we brought this argument forward to every democratic thing we do, I think we would be in big trouble.

There are sufficient rules within our Legislature to provide members an opportunity to express themselves on legislation they may have reservations about. Time allocation is not an efficient way to deal with business. To allow this to happen is a disservice to all of us, because we are all diminished by it. Rather than making time allocation motions, this government would better serve the people of Ontario by rewriting the rules so that we can divide a piece of legislation and vote on sections of it. Municipal councils do this regularly, and good parts of legislation actually get enacted, and those without support get sent back to be rewritten. The outcome of this is that the public can actually see what is hidden in the bills, as members ask to vote on individual sections that they agree with or don't agree with. It is a more transparent way to do business and allows our constituents to speak to specifics and have a real say in the laws that we pass in this House.

It is my intention to vote against Bill 21, not because it is completely bad but because only a small part of it is actually good for the elderly, particularly the NDP amendments representing the views of Ontarians. But Bill 21 gives only retirement home owners a real deal. It lets them provide their own oversight, with a majority on the regulatory authority. The majority on that authority should be the nurses, firefighters, families and government representatives who want the best health and safety for those vulnerable Ontarians.

1850

I think the thing that bothered me the most about this bill was the lack of foresight by this government for mandatory sprinkler systems. It's mind-boggling. The fire chiefs are for it; the fire marshal is for it; the Ombudsman is for it. The firefighters say it's an important tool in the box of fire prevention. Let's not forget the coroner. The coroner has done several investigations in this province and has suggested that if sprinklers were in place, these tragedies wouldn't happen.

Then I hear this weak argument from the government about cost. Here is an example of cost: In the fire in Mississauga, which injured 23 individuals—15 or 16 died and the rest had brain damage—the facility cost the insurance company $8.2 million to rebuild; it burned to the ground. When we did our investigations, we asked how much it would cost to retrofit that building with a fire sprinkler system. All it would have cost was $47,000. For $8.2 million in damage, $47,000. How many more buildings in Ontario, how many more people in Ontario, how many elders—we've lost 37 elders in the last six years. How many more have to die before this government gets it? I can't believe it. I've had insurance companies approach me; I've had sprinkler system companies approach me. Firefighters, fire chiefs, ombudsmen—everybody in this province gets it except the McGuinty government. They don't get it.

I can safely say that with the next person who dies in this province, there is going to be liability, because this was brought before this government on more than one occasion and they have done nothing. If they don't start moving on these sprinklers, someone down the road is going to get sued big time. If it were my parents in that home and there were no sprinklers, I wouldn't be a happy camper—and neither would the people I sue.

Why should seniors living in retirement homes built before 1998 be less safe than those who are able to live in newer retirement homes? The people before 1998 don't rate sprinkler systems and the ones after 1998 do? The number of sprinklers that are lacking in the small communities in Ontario is huge—huge. A lot of these older homes don't have them. Then I got the argument from one of them, "We can't retrofit old homes." Nonsense. I'm a tradesman. We can retrofit anything with sprinkler systems. It's, "Well, it's too much cost for a smaller community." That's a load of malarkey. It isn't too much for a smaller community. If they can raise funds to send bands to Europe, they can raise funds to put a sprinkler system in the old folks home in town, even if they couldn't get support from the government. It's absolutely outrageous that this government—and I'll tell you, the first one who dies in this province from the lack of a sprinkler system, where it can be proved by the fire marshal that it would have prevented it, and this government is going to be in big, big trouble.

I'm very concerned about this. The legislation is permitting retirement home operators to provide health care services. That's like the fox guarding the henhouse: "We'll do what we want. We have to provide two services, but maybe they'll cut it off there." If you don't have enough money to pay for it, you're out of luck. If you come from a less advantaged situation, it's not going to work.

Rather than going forward with this time allocation motion on Bill 21, I urge all Liberal MPPs to put their hearts and their heads ahead of their whipped party position and vote against this time allocation motion; put their hearts into protecting the elders of this province. Our grandparents and parents deserve better treatment. What's going on? The first Liberal parent or grandparent who died, this bill would be going through. It's absolute nonsense, and until this is done, I'm going to keep this up.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Any other member wish to speak?

Ms. Smith has moved government order number 10. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), a deferral slip has been handed to me, properly signed, so this motion will be handled at deferred votes tomorrow.

Vote deferred.

FAR NORTH ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE GRAND NORD

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 19, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North / Projet de loi 191, Loi relative à l'aménagement et à la protection du Grand Nord.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for York–Simcoe had the floor.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I would just like to make a couple of concluding remarks in that I believe the magnitude of this bill, the magnitude of the area being considered by this bill, the complexity of planning issues, the question of what in fact it is that the bill purports to protect, these are all very substantive issues that remain outstanding in terms of the way in which the bill is in its present form. So I think it behooves the government at this point to be looking at providing further consultation and recognizing the complexity of these issues that need to be addressed by the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I was here for all of the speech by my colleague in the Conservative caucus. While New Democrats do not agree necessarily with the analysis she provides, we do think she hits upon the nub of the issue.

The government claims that it has a special relationship with First Nations, a government-to-government relationship, a relationship of respect. As my colleague in the Conservative Party has pointed out, individual First Nations and their political entity, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, have said very directly in a letter to the Premier that the Nishnawbe Aski Nation does not approve of this legislation, does not approve of the process, does not approve of the themes that are part of the legislation—in other words, the substance of the legislation—and the First Nations are asking the government to put this legislation aside and allow some of the questions that need to be answered to be answered.

It seems to me that in a relationship of respect that is what the government ought to do. If you claim to have a relationship of respect with someone and you claim to have a special relationship with someone, and they come to you and, in detailed analysis, set out what they object to, what they find wrong and what they ask you to do, it seems to me the government ought to listen and the government ought to show respect for that relationship, yet this government is not. I think she's correctly summarized exactly what's going on there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments? The member for York–Simcoe, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Julia Munro: He stood. The member from Peterborough stood.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. My peripheral vision isn't working for this part over

here. I apologize; I missed that. Member for Peterborough.

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Mr. Jeff Leal: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. You don't need to apologize. Sometimes it's a bit difficult to see in this corner.

Mr. Robert Bailey: That's why they put you there.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Exactly. My friend from Sarnia said that's why I've been put here, but that's okay.

As any debate goes, I think the member from York–Simcoe put some issues on the table. But you can't deny the fact that in a large section of the north, like with an official plan, there's a need for appropriate planning.

I think we all witnessed just yesterday a memorandum of understanding between the major forestry companies in Canada and several provinces to protect the boreal forest, that large swath of land that goes through northern Ontario, which this Far North project is part of. That memorandum, they indicated, was historic in nature in order to protect the woodland caribou that we need to foster and nurture so they're around for future generations. That memorandum also identified a fairly significant swath of land in northern Ontario that would indeed be used for the forestry industry, which we all recognize has gone through some very difficult challenges over the last few years.

You cannot deny the fact that there is a need for appropriate planning similar to what municipalities use in terms of developing official plans to provide a framework for how a community should evolve over a period of time. For me, that's exactly what this Far North legislation will be all about: an official plan for the area and what will happen in future generations to protect what is a very sensitive ecosystem in that part of the province. I feel that anything we can do to preserve that is vitally important. As we work through it, there may be some positive suggestions that will need to be incorporated.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Certainly I said earlier on, and I'll say again, that the founder of Greenpeace made a very specific reference that so long as the forest continues to have value, it will continue to be a forest. Quite frankly, what we're seeing in Central and South America is that the forest no longer has value. Those lands are more valued as farming lands or for other aspects, and hence the forest is disappearing. We need to ensure the forest remains there.

The member from Peterborough spoke about caribou. I aided in funding a substantial report on caribou in Ontario in the late 1980s with a number of key organizations in conjunction with the province of Ontario. Quite frankly, the caribou require a little bit more. There's the woodland group, and then there's a cross group of woodland/barren-ground in the Far North that have basically been self-sustaining populations.

But if you talk to the forestry sector, as the member from Peterborough mentioned, they're adamantly concerned with the woodland caribou guidelines that are being established. The perception within that industry is that they're going to completely devastate the forest industry as a whole. We need to make sure there's a balance.

Most members wouldn't realize as well that the most carbon-converting years of a tree—this is great information when you're talking to students, and when I had the privilege and honour to sit at a desk, that was one of the things I requested as information. The first 15 years of the tree's life are the most carbon-converting years. The analogy that was brought forward to me was that they're like kids: They're growing like weeds and just bringing in and converting back and forth, and that's converting the carbon. We need to make sure we have that balance of continuing growth and development.

If you look at what took place regarding the caribou management program in Alberta, there was a substantial amount of concern because they moved from a moose management plan to a caribou management plan, which has substantially different forestry practices. As I said earlier, the forest industry is extremely concerned at the potential of moving forward with a caribou management plan in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to rise on this occasion to speak to this bill about the Far North. For someone who represents the most southern part of Ontario, indeed of mainland Canada, I'm pleased to rise and talk about the Far North. I've had the opportunity to travel there on the finance committee on many occasions and have some appreciation for the north.

Mr. Mike Colle: You went to Attawapiskat.

Mr. Pat Hoy: Yes, we did travel there as well.

The government is working hard on this bill, as has been stated this afternoon during debate. There's been a lot of consultation. My understanding is that this bill went out right after first reading, which is rather unique for this place, and will no doubt go out for more consultation after second reading. I think that's only helpful to all concerned: the opposition, the government and especially those people who would be affected by this bill.

This bill, if passed, would ensure that the First Nations who live in the area have a leadership role in land use planning. I have heard other members speak at length about that. I think we're moving in the right direction in terms of how we approach that, giving our First Nations a clear voice on this issue. It will protect a large, large tract of land in the north, and of course the First Nations people need to be consulted, and will be consulted and listened to. This will allow for sustainable economic development; the other part of this bill is economic development for all who are concerned.

I look forward to its passage and the actions that will take place after that in terms of more consultation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for York–Simcoe has up to two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to have had the members for Kenora–Rainy River, Peterborough, Oshawa and Chatham–Kent–Essex respond to the remarks I made. The member for Kenora–Rainy River struck a very important note when he talked about the issue of respect. I would argue that it's respect on a very grand scale. It's respect for ways of life and respect for a huge area of land that for most people is quite incomprehensible, in terms of its being almost half the size of this province.

In the spirit of that respect, it seems to me that more time is required. I listened to the member from Peterborough when he talked about community planning. I think many of us in southern Ontario are familiar with community planning, regional planning and how complex it is and how slow the process is if you want to be fair, if you want to listen to everybody, if you want to come up with the very best at the end of the day.

The member from Oshawa referred to what I consider to be another part of this bill that requires attention, and that's the protection side of the title of the bill. Is it science-based? We've gone past the time when we can justify something because it appears to look like something when in fact it's a very different story when science actually looks at it. When you look at species, you have to be very careful. Is this where they normally live? If it's not, then no wonder the number is small. Those are the kinds of things that have to be addressed when you have a science-based approach.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'm pleased to have some time to take part in this debate on the Far North Act. For those who may be watching, this is second reading. First reading of the bill was about a year ago. First Nations who live in the Far North of Ontario, particularly the NAN First Nation, expressed their fundamental opposition to the bill itself and to the process by which the bill was arrived at. I want to review some of that in the context of recent decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada and in the context of this government's claim of a special relationship with First Nations.

There have been a half-dozen, perhaps 10, decisions by the Supreme Court of Canada in the last 15 years that have set out the duty and responsibility of governments to consult with First Nations and accommodate the rights and interests of First Nations when governments seek to put forward legislation, regulations or undertakings. One of the things which the Nishnawbe Aski Nation objects to about this legislation is that there was no consultation surrounding it. First Nations were taken by surprise that the government would introduce this legislation without any consultation of First Nations, without any discussion or dialogue about First Nation interests or rights. They were equally taken aback that the government would do this and then assume that there was nothing wrong here.

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I think the government had it wrong in two contexts. One, the government is clearly out of sync with the decisions that have been made in the last 10 or 15 years by the Supreme Court of Canada regarding governments acting, and governments acting in the context of First Nations rights and interests. I think the government's completely out of sync with those Supreme Court of Canada decisions. But also, the government, in acting in the way that it has, is in complete contradiction to any claimed special relationship or relationship of respect with First Nations. If you respect someone, you certainly wouldn't surprise them with legislation that affects their rights and interests without talking to them, without consulting with them, without having a dialogue with them. If anything, that way of proceeding shows extreme disrespect. But that was how this legislation was presented.

The government doesn't want to admit this, but it was essentially forced to send this out for public hearings after first reading. Again, the government, in my view, completely disrespected the Nishnawbe Aski Nations of the Far North who would have their rights and interests seriously and substantially affected by this legislation. The government disrespected those First Nations by refusing to go to the very First Nations whose lives and livelihoods would be affected by this legislation, communities like Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, like Fort Severn, like Sandy Lake, like Sachigo Lake, like Kashechewan, like Moose Factory. The government simply refused to go to those individual First Nations who would be most directly and substantially affected by this legislation and consult with them. Notwithstanding that, First Nation representatives came and made presentations to the government. They first of all expressed their dismay and their concern with the legislation. They pointedly said they do not approve of the legislation. They were very explicit about why they do not approve of the legislation. But nonetheless, they submitted amendments.

If you're in a respect relationship with someone and that other party submits amendments and says to you, "We have real problems here. We want them rectified," in a relationship of respect one would think that they would be listened to. Were they listened to by this government? Not at all. So if one reads the recent letter by the grand chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, he is very, very clear in what he says: "In particular, proposals with respect to ensuring the bill contains language and mechanisms to support First Nations jurisdiction and title, and final say in land use decisions, along with the ability of the bill to provide multi-year and multi-million dollar funding for land use planning work at the local level, with funds to go through First Nations and/or an arm's-length board, depending on the wish of the communities"—these were rejected.

He also points out, and I think this is very worthy of the government again taking notice of, that when the First Nations did present their suggestions—this says, "The NAN First Nations continue to oppose the bill as it is written since a number of First Nations proposed and put forward amendments that have gone unheeded." What First Nations objected to in the first place, the government has continued not to listen to.

That is what was initially wrong. The letter I have here is from the grand chief, dated May 5, only two weeks

ago. It's to the Premier Dalton McGuinty; the Minister of Natural Resources, Linda Jeffrey; the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, Michael Gravelle; and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Chris Bentley. I want to quote from the letter because the grand chief could not be more direct. He couldn't be more direct, more concrete or, I would argue, more sincere:

"Dear Premier and Ministers:

"To begin my communication with you, I would like to start by saying that First Nations in Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) have a say on what happens on homelands and anything that anything that may happen on their homelands will require their free, prior and informed consent."

Where does that language come from? That language comes from the United Nations. It comes from the United Nations documents relating to the rights of aboriginal people. The First Nations are simply citing the United Nations declarations that, in fact, form and are meant to form part of our international law. Why won't the McGuinty government listen?

He goes on to say, "First Nations want to secure economic opportunities for their communities and future generations, and also have a sacred responsibility to the Creator to care for the land. First Nations have always determined their uses for land and will continue to do so. Bill 191 conflicts with these principles and approach to the land, therefore I have been asked by First Nations to accepted you the following message.

"As Bill 191 continues to be considered for second reading in session 2, Parliament 39 in the Ontario Legislative Assembly, the First Nations in NAN would like to remind you and other members of Parliament that they oppose the bill as it is currently written.

"NAN First Nations have been consistent in their opposition to the bill since it was first read and carried in June 2, 2009. NAN First Nations continue to oppose the bill even though the Standing Committee on General Government reviewed it and made amendments in October 22, 2009.

"The NAN First Nations have passed resolution 10/22 (attached) demanding that the bill be deferred until: (1) the government of Ontario and NAN First Nations agree on a process for consultation and accommodation"—which is what the Supreme Court of Canada says should happen—"and (2) the government of Ontario obtains their free, prior and informed consent," which is what the United Nations says should happen. "NAN's position is that these unaddressed issues alone should prevent its passage," with which I heartily agree.

This McGuinty Liberal government is attempting to act contrary to the recent decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada and contrary to the United Nations declarations dealing with the rights and interests of aboriginal peoples.

But the chief goes on, and I want to point out some of those things. As he says, the First Nations put forward a number of amendments. Almost all were unheeded by this government. He says, "In particular, proposals with respect to ensuring the bill contains language and mechanisms to support First Nations jurisdiction and title, and final say in land use decisions...."

I want to dwell on that for a minute, because I'm not sure the government gets it. First Nations see this legislation as essentially another repetition of the disgraced neo-colonial attitudes that have so often been evident in Canada. As one chief said to me, "You know, it wasn't that long ago that some bureaucrat in Ottawa who claimed to be morally and intellectually superior and holier than First Nations decided that he had a good idea on how native children should be educated. They should be taken from their families and put in residential schools."

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Imagine that, Speaker. Imagine somebody sitting in Ottawa, coming to your community and saying, "You don't know anything about educating your own kids. We're going to take your kids away and we're going to put them in residential schools and you will have no say in your child's education." That happened, and it resulted in one of the saddest episodes in Canadian history, and we're still paying the social and economic costs of that.

What do we have today? We have the McGuinty Liberal government in Toronto, which decides that it is more moral and intellectually superior than all the First Nations in the Far North, and the McGuinty government is going to write a piece of legislation and it's going to tell First Nations how their land can be used, what it can be used for, when it can be used for this, when it can be used for that.

Yes, the government says there is room for consultation, but First Nations are saying, "Oh, they came and consulted us a bit about residential schools. They asked if our kids wanted to go to a Catholic school or an Anglican school or a United Church school." That's the kind of consultation that happened then. They're saying, "We're not interested in this kind of consultation." They're saying, "Look, we're the people who live here," that 99.99% of the people who live north of the 51st parallel are First Nations. You might find the odd non-native schoolteacher or non-native nurse or non-native pilot flying around in an airplane, but 99.99% of the people who live there are First Nations. And they haven't lived there for 1,000 years or 2,000 years or 3,000 years; they have lived there for many thousands of years. They resent somebody in Toronto now saying to them, "This is how your land can be used and it can't be used for this and it can't be used for that over there, and we're going to prescribe how it's done." They resent this neo-colonial attitude.

First Nations have been living as one with the land in the Far North of Ontario for thousands of years and, I venture to say, they have made far wiser decisions than those of us who think we're so smart in southern Ontario—far, far wiser decisions. But are they being listened to by this government? Well, listen to the grand chief again. He says:

"It should be evident that the unilateral imposition of this radical transformation of NAN territory is inconsistent with the letter and spirit of Treaties 9 and 5. The

assumption of authority over the off-reserve traditional territory is unacceptable to the NAN First Nations. The letter and the spirit of Treaties 9 and 5 provide for a sharing of the land and resources, based on protocols of mutual respect."

In other words, he says that not only are you at odds with recent decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada, not only are you at odds with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but you're also at odds with the very treaties that Ontario and Canada signed with the First Nations.

I would hope that this government would start to listen. I would hope that the government understands just how neo-colonial its attitude and its approach have been from the beginning in this and continue to be in this issue. I would hope the government would realize that this is the wrong way to go.

Many people have said to me, "What do the NAN First Nations want?" I think it's fair to say that NAN First Nations want what all of us want in terms of our home community or our homeland. NAN First Nations are prepared to share some of the decision-making with the government of Ontario in terms of what happens in NAN territory, but at the end of the day, NAN First Nations want the continuing capacity to make the final decisions.

If you think about it in other terms, NAN First Nations don't come here to Toronto telling people in Toronto how they should live their lives. NAN First Nations don't come here to Toronto and lecture people about the incredible amount of greenhouse gases that trucks, cars, SUVs and other vehicles in the greater Toronto area put into the atmosphere, potentially affecting the climate not only of the rest of Ontario but the rest of Canada. They don't come here and lecture. They don't come here claiming that they should have the capacity to make decisions about this.

They're people of respect. They say, "You should make these decisions yourselves." If asked, I'm sure they'd be willing to give advice, I'm sure they'd even be willing to give suggestions. But they say, "These are decisions you ought to make." That is the very respectful position they take with respect to where they live—the Far North of Ontario. They're simply saying, "Hey, we're willing to work with the Ontario government, but this legislation needs to set out that we live here and only we live here and in the end we will have the final say in determining what happens here."

If the government is trying to say this could result in unbridled development, then the government needs an education process with respect to northern First Nations. Northern First Nations are at one with the land. For them, the land is not some geographic or geologic entity. The land is part of the community. It is part of a family's being. It's part of an individual's being. First Nations regard it as absolutely repugnant to allow the undertaking of activities which would negatively affect the land on an ongoing basis.

Again, I can only repeat the words of the grand chief, who says that this legislation, from the perspective of NAN First Nations, is fundamentally flawed, the process that the government has undertaken—a very neo-colonialist process—is fundamentally flawed and the bill should be withdrawn and held in abeyance so that NAN First Nations can, with the government of Ontario, in an attitude of co-operation, deal with some of the fundamental issues and problems that need to be addressed first.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I think that the Far North Act is a good attempt by our government to try and get some attention paid to this precious part of our province and our country. Not enough attention has been given to it. I think the member opposite is probably alluding to that in his own way, and I don't condemn him for doing that. I do think that this is an opportunity, as we go through the various phases of this bill and the public hearings that will take place, and the consultation, which will go over many months to come, I'm sure, to start to understand how vital this part of Ontario is to this whole continent, not only to this part of Canada.

By looking at the planning of this area, to maintain and make sure it's sustainable and make sure that future undertakings of any kind in that area are done in some kind of knowledge-based context—because right now, as I've said, I think there's been a real gap in understanding the value, the long-term sustainability, the very sensitive issues as they relate to water, air, land, wildlife and, obviously, first the people who live there, who are the stewards, and that's our First Nations people. So I do think this, in the long run, is going to be very important, and I emphasize "long run."

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This is not a bill that's going to have any quick fixes. It's going to be a long process of consultation, a long process of disagreement, perhaps, on some aspects of the bill. We've seen that already. This will, certainly in our children's lifetime, be very important to them. We have to pay attention to this part of Canada that has in many ways not received the attention it deserves, given the crucial role it plays for climate change and the future of this country.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Oshawa.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: The member from Eglinton–Lawrence states that it's to try to raise the profile of this issue, and it's certainly doing that. But I'm not so certain that a lot of individuals in southern Ontario will gain a perspective so that they would understand what's taking place in the north and what the implications are.

One of the best things that individuals in southern Ontario can do is provide some source of support work to get individuals to understand the north, to get there and just to get a sense of being there. I know one of the members from the third party goes there. I encourage all members to spend as much time exploring all of Ontario and the various golden treasures that are out there and how we need to protect them. These individuals have been there for years and years and years.

Subsection 11(4) goes into details about economic development. Our perspective is that that section of the bill puts a limitation on community use and unfairly restricts the potential for aboriginal communities to pursue renewable energy opportunities. Some of the aspects of the bill talk about the net benefactor, so long as that community is a benefactor. If they're allowed to create energy, who is the benefactor if they're shipping the energy to the States or southern Ontario? Quite frankly, we are. There's a lot of concern that that may be part of the limitations, that some of the resources that are there are going to be limited to forestry and mining, and we need to open those aspects up.

Some other aspects that need to be addressed: There's a significant number of other users of the Far North, like the Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters, providing services, many of which have had camps. Quite frankly, with the changes that will come about, I hear about them giving up a lot of their LUPs, or land use permits, in those areas simply because of the financial structure changes and the changing economy that's taking place right now. There is a huge impact. These individuals, those who partake in fishing and hunting and all the opportunities and the great things that Ontario is blessed with, need to be included in the entire process, ensuring that it's done correctly for future generations.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I just have two minutes to comment briefly on the comments made by the member from Kenora–Rainy River. I think he's very passionate about this bill, and I can understand why. We all share commonality in this chamber here today in that we respect land use planning. The bill itself, Bill 191, is called An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North.

I was here for last night's debate on the same bill, and two members from the government, both from the north, one from Sault Ste. Marie and another member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, spoke to this bill briefly and brought up a very significant point. They mentioned that there was consultation after first reading and that we plan to consult again after or during the second reading portion of this bill, which is quite a bit of consultation. Most bills that I've seen that come before this Legislature, as I understand, don't go through this much consultation, but this government is open to consulting, not just on one reading but on two different reading occasions, and to travel to the north and meet with the individuals there.

I also want to mention that in the bill itself, if you look at section 1, and if one were to read section 1 of this bill, it makes it quite plain: "The purpose of this act is to provide for community based land use planning in the Far North that directly involves First Nations in the planning and that supports the environmental, social and economic objectives for land use planning for the peoples of Ontario that are set out in section 6."

If you go to section 6, it says:

"The following are objectives for land use planning in the Far North:

"1. A significant role for First Nations in the planning"—so we're not ignoring the First Nations; we're involving them.

"2. The protection of areas of cultural value in the Far North and the protection of ecological systems in the Far North by including at least 225,000 square kilometres of the Far North in an interconnected network of protected areas...." The final point here is, "Enabling sustainable economic development that benefits the First Nations."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments? The member for Kenora–Rainy River, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I want to thank my colleagues for their comments, but I want to go back to quote the grand chief, because we are supposed to be in a relationship of respect with NAN First Nations. It seems to me one of the first indicators of a relationship of respect is that you hear what the other party is saying. This is what NAN says:

"The First Nations in NAN would like to remind you and other members of Parliament that they oppose the bill as it is currently written.

"NAN First Nations have been consistent in their opposition to the bill since it was first read and carried in June 2, 2009. NAN First Nations continue to oppose the bill even though the Standing Committee on General Government reviewed it and made amendments in October 22, 2009.

"The NAN First Nations have passed resolution 10/22 ... demanding that the bill be deferred until (1) the government of Ontario and NAN First Nations agree on a process for consultation and accommodation; and (2) the government of Ontario obtains their free, prior and informed consent."

I don't think it could be clearer. The very people that this government claims to be legislating for, that this government claims to be legislating in favour of, are saying to this government, "No. We approve of neither the process nor the substance of what you are trying to do." No amount of weasel words, no amount of by-the-side rhetoric is going to make it any different—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Pursuant to standing order 47(c), there having been six and a half hours of debate on this bill, the debate is deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: No further debate on this bill.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: No further business. I request adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House is adjourned until Thursday, May 20, at 9 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1938.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 20 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 20 mai 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Baha'i prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LOWERING ENERGY COSTS FOR NORTHERN ONTARIANS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES COÛTS D'ÉNERGIE POUR LES ONTARIENS DU NORD

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit / Projet de loi 44, Loi mettant en oeuvre le crédit pour les coûts d'énergie dans le Nord de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I will be sharing my time this morning with the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

It is certainly a privilege for me to speak today to An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit, which is incredibly important to the folks of my riding and all of northern Ontario.

One of the things we've heard loudly and clearly from the people of northern Ontario is their concern around high energy costs in the north. Our climate is such that our winters are longer and our heating bills are higher. We don't have the same number of resources for heating as others do around the province, so people in northern Ontario have felt the pinch. We're certainly delighted to see the focus that was placed on northern Ontario, particularly the energy credit in this spring's budget.

Our government has brought forward a number of initiatives that are going to benefit northern Ontario in particular. In Open Ontario, our budget this spring and our throne speech we introduced a number of initiatives that we think are going to better the lives of northerners, not the least of which is the future development of the Ring of Fire, which is incredibly important to our region. I know that my colleague the member from Algoma–Manitoulin will no doubt speak to that a little bit, as it is closer to his riding than mine. But with all the mining industry congregated in North Bay, so many companies—I think we have over 80 companies in North Bay that are related to the mining sector: mining engineering, professional mining retailers, equipment manufacturers. We are well situated to benefit from the development of the Ring of Fire and the initiatives that our government is putting forward.

The northern Ontario energy credit will provide northern residents who pay rent or property tax for their principal residence an annual credit of up to $130 for a single person aged 18 and older, and up to $200 for a family, including single parents. Northern residents who live on reserve and who pay energy costs for their principal residence would also be eligible for the credit. To target the assistance for those who need it most, the credit will be income-tested. What happens in this case is that the credit will be reduced for a single person with adjusted net income over $35,000 and eliminated when their income exceeds $48,000, and for a family it will be eliminated when their income exceeds $65,000.

We've noted that this benefit will impact about half of the population of northern Ontario, which is really incredible. I think it is really important to the people of northern Ontario that we are helping those who need it most, but we are also helping such a vast number of people across the north.

The credit will be available to eligible residents in the districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Timiskaming. I know that this is particularly important to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka. He mentioned, when we were in Sundridge just a couple of weeks ago, how happy he was that this credit will be available to the people of Parry Sound.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Did he say that?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: He did, actually.

Mr. Jeff Leal: On the record?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: On the record, in front of a group of municipal leaders. I was delighted to see it. I was particularly delighted to see it because the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, who is ostensibly their northern critic, is actually opposed to this initiative and spoke out against it here in this House, and when the vote was taken, he walked out. I think it sends a really mixed message as to where the Conservatives stand on this particular measure. I thought they were supportive of it; I thought they were supportive of the north. They say they are. They don't have any members from the north other than Mr. Miller, who does yeoman service as their finance critic.

Mr. Hillier is not from the north. He doesn't understand the people of the north. He has travelled up, I think,

once. Have you heard, member from Algoma–Manitoulin—more than once? But certainly his press releases would indicate that he is out of touch with the concerns of the people of the north and doesn't understand how much they appreciate and how delighted they are with this particular initiative and all of the initiatives that were set out in our budget.

Another important initiative for the north and for jobs in the north is the northern industrial electricity rate program. This will average about $150 million annually and it will provide electricity price rebates of two cents per kilowatt hour to qualifying large industrial facilities that commit to an electricity efficiency and sustainability plan.

Interjection: Sounds like a good idea to me.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's an incredibly good idea and it's certainly one that we heard loudly and clearly from our chambers, from our municipalities. They wanted to see some assistance for our large industrial facilities across the north to ensure that we are protecting the jobs that exist in the north and creating more jobs.

As we speak about creating more jobs, all minds in the north turn to the Ring of Fire, an area with potentially large deposits of minerals such as chromite, nickel, copper and platinum. We are providing, through our spring budget, $45 million over the next three years for new project-based skills training programs to help our aboriginal peoples and northern Ontarians participate in and benefit from the emerging economic development opportunities. This is incredibly important as we partner with our First Nations communities and we look to new job opportunities for those northern residents who live in this region and who live throughout the north, as I said, and who are going to benefit because of this initiative. Through this investment we are also hiring a new Ring of Fire coordinator who will lead the collective effort in advancing the economic promise of the area while encouraging responsible and sustainable development.

0910

Another initiative in the spring budget that was incredibly important to the north, and I know to my area in particular, was the additional $10 million to the northern Ontario heritage fund. I know that my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin will agree with me that the northern Ontario heritage fund provides support to some incredible projects across the north, including smaller projects for young entrepreneurs and new entrepreneurs who are seeking to start new businesses, to expand great ideas that they've had. I've had a number of small businesses—including a naturopath doctor who received $25,000. She actually set up her shop on Fraser Street in my old office and a former office of one of your colleagues, and she is doing a thriving business and has succeeded in really entrenching herself—

Mr. Jeff Leal: What former colleague was that?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: That would be the former Premier.

She has entrenched herself as a health care provider in our community, a young professional who has come home to her hometown and, through the help of the northern Ontario heritage fund, has been able to set up shop and really do great business and provide a great service to our community. She is just one example of many.

We've also been able to help an entrepreneur in our community who is introducing solar panels to many of our businesses and to the residential component of our community. We're very excited about the work he is doing. He is a huge proponent of green energy and is doing a great job leading the charge—front-page articles in the Nugget, showing off what he is doing at his home and also promoting it for other homeowners and residents across the region. Through investments from the northern Ontario heritage fund, he has been able to benefit.

We've also invested, through the northern Ontario heritage fund, in the waterfront. Many people in this House are familiar with North Bay and what a beautiful waterfront we have. But over the last 10 years it's just grown leaps and bounds. We now have two lovely carousels, and a small train which opened two weeks ago on Mother's Day. The train is run by volunteers who are all retirees of the Ontario Northland—most of them are. They are a wonderful group of people who welcome the children every day throughout the summer and run that train until dusk every day. It's an exciting little adventure down on the waterfront. The two carousels are spectacular. They were built by local volunteers as well; artists hand-carved the horses and painted them. It is just a beautiful work of art—both of them are—down on our waterfront. Those were all created by volunteers and were supported by investments through the northern Ontario heritage fund, which has developed our waterfront, which has allowed for these beautiful works of art to be showcased.

I just want to do a shout-out to Howe and to all the people down at the waterfront who are volunteering their time this summer. They are fantastic volunteers who really provide a welcoming atmosphere for our children and our visitors. I can tell you that my nieces and nephew, when they come to town, start talking immediately about when we're going to the train and the carousel. If we don't go pretty much every single day that they're in town, they're pretty disappointed. And I see lots of my friends who have left town and now have children and live in different parts of Canada and the world who come home and we often meet at the carousel; they bring their kids down, because that's where grandma and grandpa bring the kids. It's a wonderful family experience. It's through investments from the northern Ontario heritage fund that we've been able to really showcase our waterfront. Through this additional investment of $10 million, bringing the northern Ontario heritage fund up to—$90 million this year?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: It's $90 million; that's right.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you, member from Algoma–Manitoulin—we are able to make those kinds of investments across the north that are benefiting communities across the north.

I am so delighted that our government is moving forward with this bill and with the implementation of this

credit for our residents. When I was travelling the riding over the last year, talking to people about various government initiatives, including our tax package, I hosted an information session at the library in Mattawa in February. It was kind of a cold night, lots of snow, but we had a good group out. We talked about the HST, we talked about the tax package, but we also talked about energy costs and energy prices, and they were certainly concerned about that. It was one of the top-of-mind issues for them, and it certainly has been for a number of my rural residents across my region. When we brought this forward in the budget this spring, I was so delighted to be able to inform people of this new initiative that will provide an annual credit of up to $130 for single residents age 18 and older and $200 for families and single parents. It's an incredible help for those families in the north.

I hope that my friends on the other side will settle on where they stand. I hope that they will stand up for northerners and support our northern residents, because this is an important initiative for them. I look forward to hearing from them on this bill as we go through third reading debate, and I look forward to hearing from my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of this bill this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak this morning on Bill 44, the Lowering Energy Costs for Northern Ontarians Act. The government House leader, the member from Nipissing, just spoke, asking how the official opposition stands on the bill. I think we've already had one vote on it. We voted in support of the bill, so that's fairly clear as to how the opposition stands.

However, we do question—this is a relatively small part of the budget, obviously, and I do wonder why it wasn't part of the budget bill, Bill 16; why they needed a separate bill for this particularly minor part of it. Also, really, I wonder why—and the government House leader is here, so perhaps she—she won't get an opportunity, because it's time-allocated, to respond to any questions I might pose, unfortunately. But I do wonder why the government felt it necessary to time-allocate this bill and, in particular, why they used the most draconian time allocation motion I think I've ever seen.

I was at committee with this bill, a committee hearing that had no one, not one person from the north come to present to the committee in the public hearings—not one. I think there's probably, and I would assume the government House leader would agree with me, somebody in the north who's interested in this bill. There are people and industry; surely somebody would like to say how it might be improved, how it might be more efficient, because I will question the efficiency of the design model that the government has put forward. Surely there has to be somebody, some stakeholder, some individual in the north who would have liked to have had a say in this bill.

The way that it went through the process, with the government's time allocation motion—I sat on the subcommittee meeting, I believe it was on the Tuesday, and we were setting the deadlines, as you do normally, for written submission and the time for public hearings etc. I thought we were talking about a week down the road, but actually, they were planning on the Tuesday afternoon for public hearings on Thursday with the deadline the very next day. Of course, that means there was no time for advertising other than a few hours on the service we have here, the website and the internal TV service here at Queen's Park, which lots of people in the north probably don't have access to because it's not carried now on satellite.

Surprise, surprise, we go to committee on the Thursday morning; we're scheduled to have public hearings starting at 8 a.m. for a couple of hours, and guess what? Nobody shows up for public hearings, not one single person from the north. We have the technology to have them show up by video conference or by telephone as well. There was not a single presentation, not a single written presentation to the bill either, and not a single amendment to the bill.

The whole committee hearing process was a bit of a joke, to be honest. The former leader of the third party was there, and I think he was a little blunter than I was in committee. He called it a farce.

Frankly, I don't understand, even from a political perspective, why the government is using the all-time most draconian time allocation motion on this bill. You'd think they'd want—the bill is about providing $130 to an individual to help offset the higher energy costs caused by this government, or up to $200 per family. It's income-tested, so you receive the $130 per year in four cheques—those are not going to be very big cheques. If you make less than $45,000—if you make $40,000, you're going to be seeing a $10 cheque four times a year. The same applies for a family: If the family makes more than $65,000, you could receive as little as—if you make $60,000, you'll get four $10 cheques.

At the cost of doing government, it would be interesting to know how much it costs to send out that $10 cheque. It's probably $100 per cheque to send the $10 cheque out. Surely there's a more efficient way of doing this, if it wasn't for the fact that the government wants to be seen to be doing something and wants people to see this cheque coming and be able to take claim for it.

This brings me back to the time allocation. If it's mainly about politics and being seen to be doing something about the absolute reality of higher energy costs, not just in the north but across the whole province, then why wouldn't the government want to have public hearings, bring in everybody from around and make very public what they're doing? Not only that, maybe they could actually improve it and make it more efficient so that it's not costing double the cost of the actual cheques to run the whole thing. I do question the whole way it's being done, the efficiency of the way the government has decided to run this program.

0920

The reality in the McGuinty government is that we are seeing a greatly higher energy cost. Unfortunately, that

affects all residents in the province, not just those residents in northern Ontario. I would agree that in northern Ontario it's a colder climate, so energy bills will be higher there. There's no question about that, although I must bring my own riding up. The McGuinty government took Muskoka out of the north for Ontario government purposes but left Parry Sound in. I would say that the weather conditions aren't that much different from Muskoka to Parry Sound, yet if you happen to live in Huntsville or just south of the line, then you don't participate in this program. If you live in Parry Sound, you would be able to participate in this program.

Unfortunately, if you're looking at it from an income base, there's really not a lot of logic that Haliburton or Renfrew wouldn't be part of it. Those are a couple of the ridings that have lower average incomes in the province, lower than just about every northern riding. If you're looking at the ability to pay, there should be some logic that some other ridings should be considered for this as well, because everyone is going to be facing higher energy costs in the province under the government's programs.

Let me just illustrate some of the reasons why energy costs are going up. We've just seen the Ontario Energy Board approve a 10% increase in the cost of electricity. We also know there's this backdoor green tax program the government is running; I think it's to pay for energy audits. That is being challenged in court right now. That's a backdoor tax that's going to be $57 million, I believe, in total. That's another additional new cost for people on their electricity bills.

Then, of course, we have the HST happening July 1, and I think the great majority of people in the province really aren't aware that it applies to electricity, it applies to home heating oil, and it applies to gas in your car. Obviously, for all the people of Ontario, that's going to be a very significant increase.

We also have the Green Energy Act. As the opposition, we had a company go out, because the minister at the time—I believe it was Mr. Smitherman—was saying that there was going to be a 1% increase to everyone's bill as a result of the Green Energy Act. We had a company go out and assess whether that was, in fact, true, and also whether the government's claim of—I believe—50,000 jobs was correct as well. London Economics did their study, and they came back and said that it could cost up to $1,200 per household, just the Green Energy Act.

Also, there was no validation for this claim of 50,000 jobs. In fact, I think the reverse is absolutely the case, because as we have higher energy costs in the province of Ontario, it makes our industry less and less competitive. That's one of the basic building blocks of being able to compete and a reason why a company would want to locate in Ontario. We see it in the north right now; for example, in the Timmins area. I believe it's an Xstrata copper smelter that just shut down in the last few weeks, in mid-May. That's a lot of jobs in the Timmins area. That smelting operation, they're now concentrating the ore and transporting it to Quebec, where it will be smelted in a much dirtier smelter.

I met with some of the representatives from the union that came to Queen's Park. They brought the environmental information and pointed out how the one that is closing in Timmins has a much better environmental record than where it's now going to be processed in Quebec. There's a negative effect for the environment as well. But for Ontario, obviously it's the loss of 700 jobs, a major factor being the higher energy costs of the province of Ontario. That's the track we're on with the McGuinty government's energy policy, or lack of policy, I should say. In fact, a tomadamsenergy.com posting in May describes the energy policy for the province of Ontario: "The Ontario government is operating the province's vastly complex power system without a plan."

To illustrate that point of just doing things without really considering what's going on: I met with the insurance industry recently, and they pointed out how people are signing up for the solar programs for their homes without realizing—it's causing them insurance problems. What happens is, when they put those solar panels on their roof, they are classified for their insurance as being commercial, not residential, so they either have to buy much more expensive commercial insurance because they have the solar panel on the roof, or they find out when they've had a problem that their insurance actually doesn't cover the problem because they have these solar panels on the roof. That's just one example of a poorly thought out policy of the government.

We are definitely seeing much higher energy prices. This is but one small part of it that's going to help some of the folks in northern Ontario, but there are far greater problems in the energy sector.

I know the government has plans they've announced in the budget to bring in a reduction for industrial energy costs for northern Ontario. I haven't seen a bill to that effect yet, so I'm not sure when they're going to be doing that. But I also see problems with that bill in that, again, they're drawing a line as to who receives the reduced industrial energy price.

In the case of my riding alone, for example, we have businesses that are essentially northern—what you'd call typical northern Ontario businesses—like Panolam, which makes fibreboard; they're in the forestry sector. They're receiving their raw material, in many cases, from mills in the north. You have Kimberly-Clark making tissue; you have Tembec making hardwood flooring. And they're all just south—literally 10 kilometres south—of the border that has been drawn, this north-south border. So when that new program comes into effect, they won't benefit from it and they'll be competing against companies 10 kilometres north that will receive it. That just seems to be a very unfair way and not a level playing field for businesses in the province of Ontario. In the opposition here, we believe in providing a level playing field for businesses so they can compete, and the strong ones survive and do the best they can.

I know that my colleague from Simcoe North would like to comment to the bill as well. We will be supporting it. I have lots of questions about the design of it. It's too

bad they didn't take the time to hear from people so they actually could improve it, because there's plenty of room for improvement on this bill.

We have a very short time because of the time allocation—only 20 minutes—so I will leave the last six and a half minutes for my colleague. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's always a pleasure to be here in the morning—nothing like a morning in the Legislature, debating energy bills. I've got to say, it just warms your heart, as a northerner.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The smell of napalm in the morning.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That was out of that movie, and we're not going to go there.

Anyway, I just want to say up front that we, as New Democrats, will be supporting this bill. But I don't want the government thinking, because New Democrats are going to be voting in favour of this particular initiative, that somehow or other everything has been fixed in northern Ontario, that this 25% rebate that they've put forward, which I'll explain in a couple of minutes, is going to just get northern Ontario humming when it comes to productivity and it's going to get northern Ontario jobs going again and people will be working and they'll be running down the streets with banners saying, "Yahoo, Dalton!" Because I've got to say, that's not anywhere near what's going on with this particular situation.

Let's explain what we've got going on here. The government continues a policy that was started by the previous government around electricity. We have gone from a time when Ontario Hydro was a crown corporation that developed, produced and transmitted electricity at cost to consumers and the industrial sector. Why did we decide to do that some 100-plus years ago? Because we saw electricity as an economic development tool. We said that if Ontario is going to prosper as an economy in North America, then we have to be able to attract investment into Ontario. The investment that we're able to attract, because of all of the natural resources we have, is in mining, forestry and manufacturing, all of which are intensive users of electricity.

0930

You have investments such as we had in the city of Timmins, where, at the time, Kidd Creek mine built a smelter and refinery. Why? Because, yes, the government was interested in making that happen in the day and the company was prepared to make that investment, but it made economic sense because electricity prices were reasonable and it would make money by way of refining and smelting copper and zinc in that community.

We built paper mills all across northern Ontario and into southern Ontario. Why were there so many paper mills? Yes, because the fibre is here in Ontario because of the forests, but also, it is a very energy-intensive industry and we were able to buy electricity, as producers, in a way that made some sense to the bottom line.

All of that got turned on its ear with the previous government, which decided to deregulate and started to partially privatize the hydro system in the province of Ontario. At the time, I remember Dalton McGuinty, the leader of the Liberal Party—my God, was he opposed. He was with Howard Hampton and he was just saying, "Man, it's a terrible thing the Tories are doing around electricity."

What the Liberals have done with electricity makes the Tories almost look as if they did nothing, because they have accelerated the privatization—

Interjection: I take that as a compliment.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It was a bit of a backhand, Norm.

But my point is this: Where the Conservative government ideologically wanted to do some changes when it came to hydro—and the Liberals were on the opposition side of the bench—the Liberals have out-Conservatived and out-Toried the Tories when it comes to the mess they have now created in hydro. Electricity prices in this province are now among the highest in Canada. We went from being the lowest to the highest. We have a system now, at the end of the day, that is making companies such as Xstrata make decisions that they can't do business in Ontario any more and have to move to the province of Quebec where electricity prices are cheaper.

Is it only electricity in that decision? Obviously not. But it's a big part of the decision. So the government today, by way of this third reading time allocation motion, is going to get a piece of legislation that says, "We're going to provide to industrial users such as the Xstratas, the Tembecs and the Domtars of this world a 25% rebate on electricity."

Let's first of all make very clear that they're really not getting 25%, because there was already a program that was in place that provided them 18% when it came to a reduction of the electricity rate that is currently in place. This particular initiative is going to replace that particular program that gave 18%.

So is it better than 18%? Yes. The government is giving them 25% in reduction. Is that a good thing? Absolutely; it's not a bad thing. But it is not going to fix the problem for industrial users of electricity in this province, because even with the 25%, we find ourselves uncompetitive when it comes to other jurisdictions.

I propose this—and I look at the member from Algoma going no, no, no. Liberal backbenchers are for anything the government does, even though it decimates their ridings, because they're going to follow Dalton McGuinty. I've got to say it right up front.

But if this 25% were to fix the problem when it comes to electricity prices that are causing the closure of many of the jobs in northern Ontario, Xstrata wouldn't have closed down. We sat with the Premier in his office—Xstrata, the coalition members and the mayor of the city of Timmins were all there—and put that on the table and said, "Is the 25% that has been put on the table by the government, as far as the reduction, enough for you to stay?" They said, "No, it will not change our mind."

I want to make very clear up front that this 25% is not going to stop the exodus of jobs out of northern Ontario.

Will it help? Absolutely, but don't think this is a cure for the problem that you've caused in the hydro industry.

For the residential consumers, I was in my constituency office—well, I was at a funeral; my cousin Aline passed away and we buried her on Tuesday in Kapuskasing. While in Kap, I decided to do a couple of constituency appointments early in the morning. Who am I meeting with? I'm meeting with people who are getting their hydro bills and can't afford to pay them, and they're actually having their hydro shut down. You feel powerless to do anything, because here's this poor woman with two kids who comes into my constituency office and she has her bill for three months—$1,800. She's on mother's allowance for $1,100 a month.

Tell me how you're going to pay, on average, what works out to about $600 a month for electricity when you're on mother's allowance for $1,100 a month. Tell me how you are going to pay what works out to about, on average, $600 a month for electricity when you're on mother's allowance for $1,100? She was in tears. The government says that in this case she's going to get a 25% rebate. She will. She will get a 25% rebate because she qualifies under the program initiated under this bill. But does that fix the problem with hydro? Will she still be able to afford to keep the lights on for her and her children after this bill comes into place? Absolutely not.

I just want to say it's a step in the right direction, and that's the reason I'm going to vote for it. I think it's certainly not going backwards; you are going forwards. For that reason, I will vote for it, but I want the government to absolutely know this is not fixing the problem.

We still have a huge problem when it comes to electricity prices in the province, and I'll just get to one of them. That is the global adjustment. The way the government has set up the rates of hydro is quite complicated, and you just have to look at your hydro bill as a consumer to understand that.

Simply put, all of the new investments that we are now seeing—the development of the Beck, the refurbishing of nuclear reactors, the green energy that's all coming on line—all of that is being paid for by way of the global adjustment. The elevated contracts that people are signing to build windmills and solar panels and hydro dams or whatever it might be with the rollout of the FIT that we've just seen, all of that is being basically passed back into the global adjustment. There's so much of it at a time where there's actually less demand for electricity. We have an increase in production that's coming online once all these projects are coming, and we have a decrease in the amount of electricity being used because industry is shutting down and leaving Ontario. The price of all of that is now being put on the hydro bill, and it's done through what they call the global adjustment. In the case of Tembec in Kapuskasing, the global adjustment has added to their bill, on a monthly basis, $1.8 million compared to just a year ago. An additional $1.8 million is what they have to pay for electricity as a result of the global adjustment.

I'm telling the government now, if you don't get the global adjustment issue resolved and we don't find a way to socialize some of the cost of this new generation—I'm not going to argue that we shouldn't be investing in green energy—I think that's a great thing—but the question is, how do we pay for it? If you're going to go out and sign contracts where people are getting huge sums of money to sell electricity to hydro from whatever type of generation, be it either the nuclear plants that they're refurbishing or a private company that's building some form of generation, you can't throw that entirely on the hydro bill at this point. What it's doing is throwing the global adjustment through the roof, and as a result we're going to end up losing more producers in Ontario who will not be able to afford to keep their doors open because the price of electricity will be too high.

I propose that the government has to re-look at this whole issue and say, "How do we pay for all of this green energy? Should it all be done on the back of the hydro bill, or should we socialize some of the costs through the general tax revenue in order to try to spread the cost of the green energy and the refurbishments of various reactors that needed to be fixed over a larger pool of people rather than just doing it on the hydro bills?" One could argue that green energy—and I would understand that argument—is a good thing; therefore, society as a whole benefits by having less pollution emitted into the environment. So is there another way of being able to recoup the cost if that's where society wants to go? But I'm telling you now, when you put that price on to the global adjustment as you are now, it is a huge problem for many, many, many of those who are having to figure out how they're going to be able to keep their doors open a year from now, because—I want to be very clear—this 25% rebate that you are providing by way of this motion, although a good thing, doesn't negate the increases in hydro that we're seeing on the other parts of the hydro bill, including the global adjustment.

I think my colleague Mr. Hampton is going to be coming in to speak to this. I don't want to take all the time, but I just want to end on this point: For the average consumer, I want to ring the warning bells. We're now starting to see it in our constituency offices. Since the last bills have come out for hydro, especially those people who are on equal billing where they pay their adjustment every three months, I've got more and more people coming in to my constituency office talking about how they cannot afford to pay their hydro bills. Electricity prices from last year to this year have gone up tremendously. Like I say, this poor woman who came in the office on Tuesday morning in Kapuskasing had $1,800 for a hydro bill for three months. You can't afford to pay that when you're on a fixed income.

What's worse is now we've got the famous HST that's coming on July 1, so we're going to get an additional 8% tacked on to the hydro bill as a result of the HST, plus there's an application for a rate increase of 9%, so we're looking at a 17% to 18% increase in electricity prices this year alone, on top of what people had as an increase last year. So, yeah, you're going to get the 25% rebate—that woman I met with on Monday—but it's going to be

negated by the HST and by the increase, should it be approved. I'm just saying people can't afford to do that, and what we're going to start seeing is all kinds of disconnections.

0940

I look at the smile on the face of my colleague from northern Ontario who is looking there and saying, "Well, this is all made up; this isn't true. Everything is fine in northern Ontario. People are absolutely excited and happy with everything that's going on." I'm telling you, it couldn't be further from the truth. I have never seen, in my 20 years in politics, the type of reaction that you get from constituents as you walk around the riding. And you must be getting the same in your riding. People are spitting mad at this government, absolutely. It surprises me because, you know, generally people across this province are pretty easy to get along with. If you don't bug them too much, they don't bug you, and they have, generally, faith in their governments. But I have never seen people as upset as they are with this government.

I'm not saying everybody that I talk to are all saying the same thing, but I don't care; every time I'm back in the riding—if I'm in Kap or I'm in Hearst or I'm in Moosonee or Timmins—every day I get somebody who stops me on the street or in the store or wherever it might be that I bump against them, and they're saying, "When is the next election? When can we throw those guys out?" I haven't seen that. Why? Because this government, quite frankly, in response to the things they haven't done around the northern economy, is absolutely devastating to northern Ontario.

For us in the Timmins area it's a double-whammy, because now we see what's happened with Xstrata and people are upset, rightfully so, because they know that if the Premier and the government had the will and the ability, they would have been able to save the closure of that met site, absolutely. Because at the end of the day, we had Xstrata at the table and all the Premier had to say was, "Listen, we're asking you to stall on the closure of this place. You tell us what your cost issues are when it comes to electricity, you tell us what your cost issues are when it comes to the environment, and we will sit down and figure out what can be done to make sure that we can keep this site open." With a little bit of will, it could have happened. Unfortunately, this government doesn't see it that way. They're non-interventionists; they are further right-wing than the Conservatives when it comes to the economy: "Whatever the private sector does has to be good, and we're not going to get in the way of any decisions made by these guys." And as a result of that, we're into what we are now.

With that, I just want to say that, yes, we will be voting in favour, but I have to say it is not with pleasure that I see what happens across northern Ontario in regard to electricity rates in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I am pleased to continue and join the discussion on this bill. I guess, having just heard my friend the member from Timmins–James Bay and my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka—who discussed this bill almost not at all—one would not really realize that they are both supporting this piece of legislation. It is a budget bill, and it's really useful to find an opposition that will go out of its way to support a budget bill.

While they've talked about everything else under the sun, they have not chosen to speak to the particular bill that's here in a way that is reasonable. I want to talk about what the bill actually does. It applies to northern constituents of mine, and the member from Timmins–James Bay's and a good portion of the member of Parry Sound–Muskoka's—and he's wishing that it applied to the whole province. Of course, the policy of the Conservative government is to have fewer seats in northern Ontario. We know that; we've seen that; we've done that over time. We know that the member for Timmins–James Bay, for example, and I both have hugely larger ridings because of the actions of the government that he supported.

But this is a bill that—I want to give credit to my colleagues the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, the member for Nipissing, the member for Sudbury, the member for Sault Ste. Marie, the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan and our Minister of Northern Development, the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North, who along with myself worked very hard to find something that would provide northerners with relief from energy prices—and it's all about energy; it doesn't say "electricity." If you have natural gas, it helps you. If you have heating oil, it helps you. If you buy gasoline, it helps you. It helps you with all of those kinds of things. While we have these discussions about one particular kind of energy, the bill is purposely designed to help people with the kind of energy they need the most help with. That's what it does. I'll just go over that because I think maybe that has been lost in the discussion here this morning.

Northern residents who pay rent or property tax for their principal residence in northern Ontario would be eligible for an annual credit of up to $130 for a single person aged 18 and older and up to $200 for a family, including single parents. Northern residents who live on-reserve and who pay energy costs for their principal residence would also be eligible for the credit. To target the assistance to those who need it most, the credit would be income-tested. The credit would be reduced for a single person with an adjusted net income of over $35,000 and eliminated when his or her income exceeds $48,000. It would be reduced for families when adjusted family income is over $45,000 and eliminated for the family when it exceeds $65,000.

As noted in the recent budget, in order to provide northern residents with timely assistance—and this speaks to what the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka was saying—our government is proposing an interim method of payment this year so that this year, we can do it. I know we're getting a lot of calls in my constituency office about it because this is a popular program that people want to take advantage of. They would apply to the

Ministry of Revenue to receive the 2010 credit, which would be delivered in two instalments—the first in November and the second in February 2011. Applications for the 2010 credit would be available in August 2010. Some applications would be distributed directly by mail and they would also be available on the Internet and in designated northern locations. More information about how to apply for the 2010 credit will be available once the application forms are ready for distribution.

That is important to the people I represent. It makes a difference. Neither of the two parties had any interest in proposing this credit. This comes because of the strong voice of the northern caucus and a Minister of Finance who understands and sat with us and talked about how this could happen. We had the Minister of Revenue; he came and supported our putting forward a proposal to help people with their energy costs in northern Ontario, because obviously, our weather is colder. In the winter, our days are even shorter than they are in southern Ontario, and it means, quite clearly, that you need to use more energy. Our distances are greater. From Manitouwadge to Thunder Bay is a short drive of about 400 kilometres. From Hornepayne to Hearst, it takes you an hour and a half. There are huge differences in the price of some of our commodities. Gasoline, for example, is one we hear a lot about. This is not going to solve all these problems, but it is going to go a way that none of the other two parties even remotely suggested anywhere.

I'm really pleased as a northern member to be able to tell my constituents that not only did I vote for it, I helped propose it—a proposal that we did not hear from anybody on the other side, which would help consumers and residents of northern Ontario.

I really wondered why that wasn't proposed. I'm proud of our electricity programs which—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm really pleased that the members chose—the NDP chose to vote against a rebate for large industrial consumers in our large factories and mills. They did that. People should know that the very thing that the member from Timmins–James Bay talked about as not being sufficient—he voted against anything, which I think members of the public would find to be extraordinarily confusing, at the very least.

0950

We heard about the heritage fund. I think my colleague the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs was talking about that. She talked about how this year alone in the budget, which both the Conservatives and the New Democrats voted against, there was an increase of $10 million to the northern Ontario heritage fund, bringing it to $90 million a year.

Mr. Jeff Leal: They didn't support that?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: They did not support that. I find that kind of difficult to understand, and most northerners would find that difficult to understand—except if they're talking about my friends the New Democrats, who had the opportunity to take $60 million out of the northern Ontario trust fund and put it into general revenues when they were the government, essentially picking the pockets of northerners at the end of their government.

I do not have the same kind of take out there on what my constituents are saying to me about life in northern Ontario. They are proud of northern Ontario. They are proud to live and work, and they are proud of the improvements that we've made in health care. My constituency, for example, is pleased that, over the past very few years, we now have six new family health teams—I think it's six; maybe it's seven—since this government has come into power.

I had the privilege of talking to the good folks in Mindemoya, in central Manitoulin, where they have a brand new family health team. A new one is going into Chapleau and a new one in Manitouwadge. Those folks are well on their way.

The government just announced another up to $85,000 each for those new family health teams, and that is something that's going to make patient care in those areas very helpful.

I talked to Ornge the other day, the people who provide air ambulance services across northern Ontario, across the whole province for that matter, and I was interested to know that they provide 19,000 flights a year, often for people from Manitouwadge or from Hornepayne—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Hearst.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: —or from Hearst—to the places where they need treatment. The service is much enhanced, and land ambulance service has actually increased in the amount of funding that we've provided to them.

I would urge every member—I know they will vote for this even though they are showing at least some concern about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to respond or to speak to this bill, although it is a bit of a strange bill. You know what? We, on this side of the House, will support a bill that will help people out in northern Ontario. We understand that. Although, as we said earlier, it doesn't help everyone out.

I did want to put something on the record right off the bat, though. I think we had air ambulances before Dalton McGuinty. Maybe I'm wrong; I could be wrong.

Interjection.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: So it's just Dalton McGuinty who brought the air ambulance system in. Isn't that wonderful?

This government wonders why we vote against the budget. You know what? They're talking and bragging about how some of the people are going to get a $200 rebate back on their hydro. I'm not even going to get into all the costs around the hydro with the HST and the increases and all this green energy tax and everything, but if I could just point something out: They're going into debt in the province of Ontario at $20 billion this

year—$20 billion. Do you know what that's going to cost every man, woman and child in northern Ontario and across this province? About $1,530 apiece. For a family of four, there's $6,000 in accumulated debt that this government is adding this year alone, and they sit there and brag about the $200 they might give back to a family. Give me a break. That is pathetic.

The other thing: It's beyond belief when they spin these stories around and they try to actually make people think—they try to spin it so it makes everybody appear as if they don't care about the north. The House leader talked about the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington only going to the north once. The reality is that he's our northern critic, and he has been there about 10 times in the last year. He's visiting a number of ridings. I'm going to tell you, when we're talking politics, the House leader had better start worrying about her riding, because you know what? We're going after that riding, and we're going to win that riding in the next election. We've got good candidates coming forward. I wouldn't be picking holes in Mr. Hillier if I was the House leader.

One of the things I'll be really interested in seeing is how the government will roll out these cheques, the administrative cost of it. It will be interesting to see how those cheques are rolled out, how many TV ads are put on, how many radio ads are put on, how many newspaper ads, these full-page stories about giving northern Ontario's poor people $130. I dare them to not put one penny into that. We all know that every program the government has, they always find tens of thousand of dollars more to advertise their government program and brag about it so they can try to get those extra votes. That's what it's all about.

I bet you anything when the rebate cheque goes out, the $130 or whatever it is, there will be a fancy letter from Brad Duguid or the Premier saying what wonderful things they've done. Do you think they'll actually do that? I bet anything they will. That's what you're trying to do. You're playing politics with this legislation because you know how much trouble you're in in the north.

The mining—the forestry industry in the north has never been decimated as badly anywhere by any government in the history of this country like the mining industry has been in northern Ontario under Dalton McGuinty. Are they bragging about that? No, they just pretend. They say, "That's a world economic problem. There's nothing we can really do about that." The list goes on and on and on.

Of course, then, as the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka mentioned, the harmonized sales tax is kicking in on July 1. For anybody who was going to save $130, give me a break. They're going to pay it right back on the harmonized sales tax on their hydro bills, on their gas bills, on everything they go to buy. That is going to have the single most negative impact that any tax has had on the province of Ontario.

The Premier likes to have that spin story every day. In fact, everybody's getting a little bit sick of it. People are wondering where the 600,000 jobs are going to come from. If you believe that 600,000 jobs are going to be created under Dalton McGuinty, you'd better believe that Mickey Mouse will be the next governor of Florida, because that's about the kind of spin he's putting on this story. There's absolutely no proof, no public plan, no public study, no business plan. He stands up each and every day and talks about 600,000 jobs with absolutely no proof how it will happen. We've watched 300,000 manufacturing jobs disappear in Ontario because manufacturers have left here in droves because of the economic policies of this government—but somehow 600,000 new jobs.

We've been trying to keep track, on this side of the House, of how many jobs they've actually created. As far as I know, unemployment is down somewhat. Most of the jobs created are in the public sector.

Applause.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: The seals over there are clapping away, whatever they want to do.

I was told last night—it would be interesting to see the clarification. How many homeless people are actually in the city of Toronto? It would be interesting if somebody could respond to that with exactly the number of people, and then find out the amount of money the government has flowed to the city of Toronto and the fights it had with the city of Toronto. I understand that in that field alone there are more people on the affordable housing file than there are homeless. That is beyond belief, the kind of money that's being wasted in some of the public service areas. That's where your jobs have been created: in the public service.

You haven't created any manufacturing jobs. You haven't created anything in the small business sector; they're all going out of business. They are fearing for their jobs.

When you look at what's happened to First Nations, the First Nations jobs are coming from selling cigarettes. That's where they are coming from, and they're doing that at the expense of the small convenience store owners, who are basically in a very negative position as far as their business opportunities.

The government can brag about this bill and pretend they're actually doing something, but it will be interesting to see how they roll out that money in the end. It will also be interesting to see how much government advertising is behind the rollout of this particular bill.

We can support this piddly rebate, but you know what? I'd much rather the people of northern Ontario not be facing a $1,500 accumulated debt this year for each and every man, woman and child.

1000

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's never a pleasure to speak to time allocation motions. Nevertheless, it's here, and that's what we are debating.

I have to say to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, we've got to put this rebate in context, and the context is what my friend from Timmins–James Bay was trying to

do. He spoke directly to this energy rebate portion by talking about the context, and the context is that we've had a lot of job losses in the north. We have high unemployment. I think forestry is operating at a third of the capacity that it used to a long time ago, which means thousands of jobs have disappeared. We've lost pulp and paper mills—jobs have disappeared. We've lost sawmills—jobs have disappeared, which means people do not have the capacity to pay for things that they might have been able to pay for but a short four or five years ago.

What we have contextually is that the harmonized sales tax is going to add 8%, which I think adds up to about $220 in energy bills. Energy bills will jump up another $220, $250, so that's close to $500 for things I am aware of. It could be less; it could be more. I suspect it's going to be more. So when you look at the context of how they're going to be hit, having been whacked badly over the last four years, this is going to be very hurtful.

Now, the rebate is going to help a little bit. If it was you, member from Algoma–Manitoulin, who moved this motion and helped to craft this bill, God bless you. You're going to help a few people; you're right. So we have to thank you, I suppose. But we can't thank the government for whacking the whole of the province, and especially whacking northerners, with a huge bill.

What you're saying is, which you didn't admit to, "It's going to be a big bill. We are going to help a little bit. Yes, we're whacking you. We don't mean to, but we are. We recognize we're going to whack you badly, and so we're going to minimize the whack a little bit. We hope that northerners will appreciate the fact that some of us recognize the tremendous losses, tremendous hurt, tremendous pain of unemployment, and we're going to help you a little bit."

So thanks, Mike, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, for helping to the extent that you were able to.

Our problem is that the devastation is huge, and it's getting harder and harder to deal with.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: So what's your plan?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What's my plan? My plan is to attack your lack of a plan. My plan is to attack you when you stand up with a nice smile, with you and the other members saying, "We're cutting income taxes, and 93% of you are getting an income tax cut," and you all smile from corner to corner. You whack them and then you say, "But we're going to reduce income taxes." Then you say, "We have a huge $20-billion deficit, but we're going to"—with a smile—"cut income taxes; isn't that great?

I remember when you guys were in opposition with the Tories, You used to say to the former Premier, who was a New Democrat, now turned Liberal, "You don't have a revenue problem. You've got a spending problem" You guys used to say that, along with the Tories. All of a sudden, you're in government and you say, "We have a globalized recession. We can't help ourselves." But when Bob Rae faced the free trade agreements that whacked Ontario badly, you used to say, "No, Bob. This is your problem, Bob. You caused this." Now the Liberals are saying, "Oh no, we didn't cause this. It's the world that caused this." I love to see those contradictions.

People in the north are hurting. People all over Ontario are hurting, and they're hurting bad. The harmonized sales tax is going to whack them, and whack them bad. This is not going to be helpful. Your desire to cut progressive income taxes is a bad thing, not a positive thing. You are hurting this province in ways that you don't understand, and then you stand up and say, "Well, what's your plan?" Give me your cabinet seat, and we'll discuss it. Move yourself away, step aside and we'll discuss what we're going to do. In the meantime, your lack of a plan is hurting and whacking Ontarians, and whacking them badly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The debate time for this bill has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 10, 2010, I'm now required to put the question.

Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Orders of the day?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: No further business, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): There being no further business for this morning, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we will have question period.

The House recessed from 1006 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I beg your indulgence: This is more like a message for Lars Moffatt, who is the page from Algoma–Manitoulin who turned 14 yesterday. His classmates and teachers at Arthur Henderson Public School would like to send him birthday greetings from the Hawk's Nest, which is the nickname of their classroom, and wish him all the best.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I would like to welcome a delegation coming from China who represent the company Singyes Solar. They're coming to Ontario to study our energy system here in this province and, also, a possible investment in the London area and possibly somewhere else in Ontario. Welcome.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I would like to introduce in the west members' gallery Kevin Gaudet from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Most people here have heard of the Red Hat Society ladies. We have a group here today from Simcoe North: Marlene Heltcher, Margaret McBain, Della Durnan, Angie Pittman, Helja Adelson and Kathy Rainford. They're known as the Decadent Dames

of Lagoon City. They are over here in the members' gallery. And just because they have red hats on doesn't mean they're Liberals.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I would like to introduce to the Legislature Amanda Singh, who has joined our office at the ministry. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I'd like to introduce Jaafar Oleichie, who is the cousin of our page Jacob Alaichi. He's here today, I understand, so we would like to welcome him.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Ottawa–Vanier and page Caroline Robertson, to welcome her father, Hugh Robertson, to the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of the leader of the official opposition and member for Niagara West–Glanbrook, I'd like to welcome the grade 9 class from Heritage Christian School who are visiting Queen's Park today. Welcome.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On Monday, May 17, the third party House leader, the member for Welland, Mr. Kormos, raised a point of privilege concerning reports in the press about the recruitment process for the position of Ombudsman of Ontario. The member alleges that the leaks to the press of information about this confidential process constitute a contempt of the Legislature, and furthermore that published statements allegedly made about the current Ombudsman of Ontario are libellous and slanderous. The House leader for the official opposition, Mr. Yakabuski, and the government House leader, Ms. Smith, also spoke to the point of privilege.

An important fact in this matter is that the parent acts of the various officers of the Legislature are silent with respect to the method of recruiting officers. The officers are all appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, on address of the assembly, but what is not spelled out is the process for the assembly itself to originate such an address. Therefore, in strictly procedural terms, the address is proposed with notice as a substantive government motion and, upon passage by the assembly, the Lieutenant Governor, on advice of cabinet, is in a position to effect the appointment of the parliamentary officer in a manner consistent with the stated wishes of the Legislative Assembly.

Over time, ways have been found to involve members of this House in the recruitment of various parliamentary officers, and within the last 10 years or so it has been the case that the Speaker has been called upon, through what one might call "the usual channels," to compose a panel of three members, one from each recognized party, and chaired by the Speaker, to perform this task. This informal approach was again put to use on several very recent occasions to deal with pending vacancies in the positions of the Ombudsman, the Integrity Commissioner and the Environmental Commissioner.

I consider it important to recount the general circumstances surrounding these recruitment panels because it confirms that, although a process of some long standing, it is an informal process that comes into being through the negotiations and the co-operation of the parties in this House. Its purpose is to involve the House in the selection of its own officers, to the extent possible, with the intent that the selection panel is able to recommend a candidate for appointment.

The member for Welland in his submissions likened this panel to a legislative committee, and asserted that the breach of confidentiality that he alleges has occurred is subject to the same potential remedies that would be in play in the case of, say, a prematurely released report of a committee of this House. The question for the Speaker, then, is, does this hiring panel have the same status of a committee of this Legislature?

No motion or other formal action of this assembly gave life to the panel. It had no independent authority, as a House-appointed legislative committee would have had, such as those conferred by the Legislative Assembly Act or the standing orders. It was an ad hoc panel of the members of the Legislative Assembly, but it was not a committee of the Legislative Assembly. The difference is substantive. A parliamentary committee is a creature of this House, subservient to the instructions of this House, and able to report only to this House. An unauthorized or premature release of a committee report or in camera proceedings has indeed been found on certain occasions in this Legislature and in others to be a prima facie breach of the privileges of this Legislature.

The status of this panel was informal. While it engaged itself in an important advisory role to the guiding minds and leadership of the House, it was not answerable or accountable to the House per se. Indeed, it might be likened to the parliamentary caucuses or the House leaders' group, each of which consists of members of the House and meets regularly to discuss matters of parliamentary business. These are not direct creations of the House, though, and are not subject to the conventions of parliamentary privilege, as a parliamentary committee indisputably is. Unlike a committee of the House, whose existence and scope of activity is conferred only by the House, no such restrictions attach to the informal bodies I have just mentioned.

That is not to say, however, that the hiring panel's deliberations should have been subject to any less rigorous an observance of confidentiality than should a fully fledged legislative committee. As chair of the panel, I can assure everyone that the existence of press coverage about the panel's activities, regardless of its level of accuracy, is extremely distressing and disappointing.

The panel as a whole had a valid expectation that the confidentiality of its proceedings, discussions and decisions were to be held in confidence. Each member of the panel was justifiably entitled to a similar expectation and had a coexistent and mutual obligation to ensure it. This is not so because of the status of the panel, whether it be

a parliamentary body or not, but because of the nature of the panel's work: a human resources assignment.

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From a normative point of view, in this case, privilege is beside the point. Nevertheless, what is before us is a matter of privilege. For the reasons already cited, though, I cannot find that a prima facie case has been made out.

Finally, the member for Welland essentially framed his point of privilege within the larger question of contempt and whether a matter of libel or slander is at play in this issue. As I'm sure the member can appreciate, allegations of libel are only that, and it is certainly not to the Speaker to adjudicate them.

It is, however, possible to imagine that an attack or obstruction of a parliamentary officer could give rise to a finding of contempt, in the proper scenario. The member for Welland has furnished the Speaker with numerous press reports to support his point. However, press reports are just that: reported—and sometimes paraphrased—commentary. They do not rise to the level of proved libel, and in the absence of a report or plea made to this House from one of its officers that such an occurrence has interfered with the performance of his or her duties, I cannot find that a prima facie case of contempt has been made.

I want to read a paragraph again, though, because I think it is important for all members: "That is not to say, however, that the hiring panel's deliberations should have been subject to any less rigorous an observance of confidentiality than should a fully fledged legislative committee. As chair of the panel, I can assure everyone that the existence of press coverage about the panel's activities, regardless of its level of accuracy, is extremely distressing and disappointing."

I want to thank the member for Welland, the official opposition House leader and the government House leader for their submissions on the matter.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Acting Premier: Can the Acting Premier tell us how much revenue on gasoline and diesel the McGuinty Liberals will collect from the Premier's new HST tax?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have detailed, in great detail, the fact that, overall, Ontarians will pay less tax. They will pay less tax because—the member opposite does not want to acknowledge the substantial cuts in personal taxes, the substantial cuts in business taxes, the substantial cuts through the sales tax credit and the substantial increase in the Ontario child benefit.

The member will also see outlined, both in last year's budget and this year's budget, details with respect to our projection on revenues received from the HST as compared to the PST.

Those are thorough, they're full and they explain to Ontario the importance of creating 600,000 net new jobs over the next 10 years.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Since the Minister of Finance doesn't seem to have the answer, Mr. Kevin Gaudet of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation does, and he's here with us today. Just minutes ago, the CTF released its 12th annual gas tax honesty report. Assessing HST on gasoline prices that hover at about a dollar per litre, the report concludes: "For the government it works out to a minimum of $1.6 billion in extra revenue...."

Based on that information, can the finance minister tell us what the impact of the HST burden will be on the average family in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I reject the work as being partisan and don't accept either the underpinnings of it or its conclusions. Instead of Mr. Gaudet, I prefer to rely on the TD Bank econometrics, I prefer to rely on the Conference Board of Canada, on the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—honest, unbiased and unvarnished opinions that recognize that overall, this tax package will create some 600,000 net new jobs over the next 10 years. It will identify another $47 billion in capital—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I recognize that it is a long weekend and a constituency week coming up. I would be very happy to facilitate an early departure for anyone.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Frank Klees: The attempt by the finance minister to characterize the work of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation as partisan will be seen for what it is by the average Ontario family.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation estimates that a family driving a mid-sized car will pay an average of $246 a year more for the HST. Families in the GTA, rural Ontario and the north can expect the HST for fuel to cost them as much as $400 more. In addition, the province of Ontario, as the minister will know, has a huge fleet of vehicles, and every dollar of additional HST on that fleet comes out of where? The average family's payment of their taxes and HST.

I ask the minister once again: How much more is this government prepared to take out of the pockets of hard-working Ontario families?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Let me re-emphasize: I reject categorically that assertion by the member opposite and by the source he quoted. I prefer to rely on the good work of Mike Harris and Preston Manning with respect to this tax package. I prefer to rely on the support we had from Jim Flaherty, from Lois Brown, from Larry Miller, from Mike Wallace—from all of the federal Conservatives who I think have actually read and taken a balanced look at this issue.

This is absolutely the right policy for a stronger future for Ontario. Most Ontarians will see their taxes come down. Most Ontarians will recognize that our future will be better and bigger and stronger if we stand firm and do everything we can to create those 600,000 net new jobs.

TAXATION

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Acting Premier. Why did the Premier sign the taxpayer protection pledge in 2003 and, in doing so, promise not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What I can say is that we committed to invest in health care, education and those services that the people of Ontario told us they valued the most—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I gave you the answer, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You did not ask the question; your colleague did.

Acting Premier?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I was just reiterating our commitments and priorities as government, and that is to invest in the services the people of Ontario said they valued the most.

When we were first elected to government—the members on the other side of the House don't like to admit this—we inherited a deficit, something that was hidden from the people of Ontario and something that we were forced to deal with. Also, as we have been in government, we have been hit with the single most significant economic event—the recession. It has been global and it has required that, as a government, we look at how we can—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Actually, the Premier signed the taxpayer protection pledge at least twice, in 1999 and 2003. Since signing an oath that he wouldn't raise taxes unless he had the consent of the people, the Premier has created the health tax, what amounts to a backdoor energy tax, taxes on electronics, plastic bags and now the HST. Voters of Toronto were not asked for consent to increase taxes for property transfers, vehicle registration and waste removal that the Premier knew he was enabling.

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The Premier had a choice before he put his promise in writing in 2003. Why did he promise Ontario voters in writing that he would not raise taxes without their consent and then repeatedly do exactly that?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy to have this opportunity to remind the members opposite that what we have done in our most recent budget is deliver the single largest tax cut for the people of Ontario. We have reduced corporate taxes. We have reduced business taxes. We have eliminated the small business surtax. We have reduced personal income tax: 93% of Ontarians will receive a tax cut.

The people of Ontario understand that we have established a balance here. We will continue to invest in health care, in education and in those services that are most important to them. At the same time, we are delivering tax cuts to those who need them the most. We are stimulating our economy by providing tax cuts to our businesses and to corporations so that our economy will be sustainable going forward, that we will be able—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: In the coffee shops of Ontario, politicians who make election promises that they have no intention of keeping are called a word I'm not permitted to say in this House, but it begins with the same letter as Liberal.

The Premier's track record fuels a cynicism that led the Canadian Taxpayers Federation to say in its report, "The only thing that should surprise Ontarians (about Dalton McGuinty) is if he doesn't surprise them with new taxes after every election."

The next time the Premier offers his solemn pledge to the people of Ontario on taxes, who on earth is going to believe him?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What our Premier and our government—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just can't help but think of an interesting video I watched last night with a line that I use that says, "Take it outside."

Acting Premier?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What people in the coffee shop remember is when the party on the other side was in government, when they said they weren't going to close hospitals, and they did; when they said they had balanced the books, and they hadn't. At the same time, in the face of all of that, they decimated those services that the people of Ontario valued the most.

Since we've come to government, we have invested in those services that the people of Ontario say that they value. We have hired nurses. We have hired teachers. We've hired doctors. We've hired water inspectors. We all know what happened when water inspectors were fired out the door. We've hired meat inspectors. When we came to government, there were 10 meat inspectors in the province of Ontario; now there are over 130. Those are the kinds of investments that the people in the coffee shop are interested in. That's what we've—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Speaker's almost at the point—although I don't have a family, I understand that if a baby cries a lot, you just let the baby cry itself out, and it will fall asleep. Perhaps for members of all sides of the House, we'll try something a little different today, and you'll talk yourselves out, talk yourselves all into silence.

New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. This coming May long weekend is the last one that's going to be HST-free. Come July 1, there will be no place like this. It will cost more to go for a weekend drive or take the kids camping.

Why is the McGuinty government making it 8% more expensive to discover Ontario?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Why did the NDP vote against a plan that would create 600,000 jobs in the province of Ontario? Why did the NDP vote against a plan that will attract $47 billion worth of new investment to this province? Why did the NDP vote against the HST rebate, designed to provide some $260 a year tax free to the people in this province who need the most help? Why did they vote against doubling the seniors' property tax grant from $250 to $500? I understand why they maybe didn't agree with us in regard to the Conservatives, but I can't understand why they would vote against tax cuts for the people in this province who need the most help. Really, that's the question that we have. All of us on this side of the aisle ask: Why are you against 600,000 jobs? Why are you against new investment? We—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The McGuinty government is making long-weekend family outings more expensive. After July 1, taking the train to catch a show in Niagara-on-the-Lake is going to cost 8% more. The show itself, not to mention the accommodation for a night's stay, will be more expensive too. So will taking the kids swimming.

What advice does the Acting Premier have for families this coming long weekend? Should they enjoy it while they can still afford it?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I know that we have been encouraging the good people of Ontario to go to a website; over two million people have gone to that website. It is ontario.ca/taxchange. You can find out about the benefits of our tax reform package. This is the type of thing that people are looking at. I was asked recently: "Why is there a different reaction here in Ontario than in British Columbia?" I've told people that our single sales tax is part of a larger tax reform package, a package designed to get people back to work.

I remember when the NDP used to think that we should have full employment in this province. On this side of the House, we're doing something about it. We're making sure that there are more jobs in the province of Ontario. We'll do what is required as a government to ensure that we have strong economic growth. Maybe on that side of the House you don't understand that Ontario is leading Canada and Canada is leading the world when it comes to economic growth. That's—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: From enjoying a round of golf to a night at the theatre, from a visit to a fishing lodge to camping in a provincial park, the weekend adventure is about to get 8% more expensive. Yes, there's no other place like Ontario for great thrills this summer, but how is the McGuinty government's new 8% tax on just about all the thrills going to make things better for Ontario families?

Hon. John Wilkinson: The people of Ontario can't enjoy the wonderful attractions in this province if they don't have a job. This is all about making sure that we have people working in the province of Ontario. I can't believe that a party that has always promoted the value of workers voted against a policy that will result in 600,000 net new jobs in the province of Ontario. Surely, they've lost their way over there when it comes to the importance and the dignity of a job.

I know that you're purporting to represent the people on the golf course and at the fishing lodges. But on this side of the House we are focused on making sure that people have a job in the 21st century. That's what our children and our grandchildren are expecting, and we will do what is required: working in partnership with the Conservative government in Ottawa to make sure that we have a strong Ontario, a requirement for an even stronger Canada.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is as well to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, the unelected Metrolinx board approved a gutted Transit City plan, a plan that will delay long-awaited transit expansion for people in Toronto neighbourhoods like Rexdale, Malvern and Jane-Finch, a plan that will shorten promised transit lines by 22 kilometres and 25 stops, a plan that seriously puts into doubt the future of the whole Transit City plan. Was yesterday's announcement supposed to be good news for long-suffering Toronto transit users?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Yesterday's announcement absolutely was good news for transit riders in Toronto. Yesterday's announcement commits to a plan that, instead of being completed over eight years, will be completed over 10 years, which is a pretty reasonable delay, given our economic situation. Yesterday's announcement put forward a plan that will start working on all of those projects. Yes, there will be some delays, but there will be work done on all five projects starting immediately. Yesterday's announcement reinforces our commitment to public transit in the GTHA.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The decision to cut this program, to cut the Transit City plan—and that's exactly what it is; it's a cut—rests at the feet of the McGuinty government. Toronto Mayor David Miller said it clearly: "This isn't [Metrolinx's] decision. It's the Premier's decision."

The Premier made a promise before the 2007 election that he would build MoveOntario 2020. He supported Transit City plans in 2008 to great fanfare. He has now broken both of these promises, but he still wants Toronto voters to trust him. Why the heck should they?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think people in Toronto understand that following through on a $9.5-billion investment over 10 years, beginning the work right away, following through on a commitment to move on a regional build that is the biggest in a generation—I think that it is strange, actually, that the mayor can't see that this is part of his legacy. This is part of the work that he has done. He has worked with us up until now; it would be wonderful for him to work with us going forward.

I think that people understand that to get started on this work right away, they will have a better transit system for themselves, for their children and for their grandchildren.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There is no doubt that the recession has been harsh and that the provincial deficit is real, but how is slashing public transit funding the best way to stimulate the economy and reduce the deficit? This government refuses to discuss the true cost of its decision. From slowing economic growth to polluting the environment, this is a wrong-headed decision that will cost much, much more in the long run. Why won't the McGuinty government realize its mistake and immediately reinstate the $4 billion that has been cut from public transit in Toronto?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There has been no cut to the transit projects in the city of Toronto or in York region; there has been a delay. That's a commitment of $9.5 billion, and yes, we're spreading that investment over a longer period of time.

But let's talk about the other investments that we're making in the city of Toronto. Let's talk about the $172 million to revitalize Union Station; let's talk about the $416 million that's going towards replacing TTC streetcars; let's talk about the $874 million that is going into the Pearson-Union air-rail link; and let's talk about the fact that this is the party that has opposed that investment, that has opposed that work every step of the way. I am extremely proud to be part of a government that is making the biggest investment in public transit in a generation in the GTHA—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

I remind the member from Hamilton East that it's much preferable, if he is going to interject, that he be doing it from his seat.

New question.

MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Acting Premier. It concerns an abuse of trust in this House on three separate occasions in the last few weeks. First, the government House leader disclosed confidential details about an in camera process to the media. The Liberals seated behind her know that the late night sittings are because she tried to push too many bills through this House before the summer, begged the opposition to help her fix up her mess and then backtracked on the deal when the Premier didn't like our HST motion. Then, the government House leader tried to blame the OPP for blocking the Ontario PCs on budget day, but yesterday, under oath, Nicolaas Cliteur, the OPP sergeant in charge of lock-up security, repudiated everything she said.

Ordinarily, it's three strikes and you're out. Why does the Premier still back his minister?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On two issues you raised in your question, I'm quite comfortable having those put.

The last part of your question pertains to an issue based on a ruling of the Speaker that was referred to a committee for investigation, and I don't think it's appropriate to have two parallel discussions taking place. I'm going to allow the question to be put, but will not allow in your supplementary anything dealing with the investigation stemming from my ruling.

Acting Premier?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think that it's important—for the folks who would perhaps be watching these proceedings, it may not be clear how we operate in this Legislative Assembly.

The House leaders do very good work on behalf of our respective caucuses. There certainly is an expectation that on every issue the goal is to ensure that the business of the province of Ontario is accomplished in a timely way. We know that the House leaders of all three parties have that goal in focus.

It does happen from time to time, however, that there is a parting of the ways in terms of how members of the opposition and our House leader may think the business should unfold in this place. We respect the consensus process that we have in this place. There certainly is and has been a great deal of respect among House leaders, and—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The three examples that I raised are really to illustrate our concern on this side of the House about the process not being followed. We thought we had an agreement in principle with respect to matters proceeding through this House, which was reneged upon with respect to—

Interjections.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: With respect to the government House leader, we thought we had a deal.

So my question is, how are we going to be proceeding in the future and can we rely on the word being given, when a deal is made, that will actually be followed through?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: For those who would be in this assembly today, it's obvious that the member from the opposition has presented a statement around a sup-

posed agreement, and I think there's a disagreement on whether or not there was an agreement.

At the end of the day, what the House leaders focus on is ensuring that we accomplish as much business on behalf of the people of Ontario as we possibly can, and we try to get that done with a consensus.

I think it's important for the people of Ontario to understand that as a result of the consensus that has been in place we have been able to pass our budget that would deliver tax—I'm sorry—that we have passed tax cuts for 93% of the people in the province of Ontario. That is our goal: to ensure that the work of this assembly carries on. There are some times that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1110

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Ontarians feel a very strong connection to Queen's Park and this Legislative Building. They see this place as a reflection of democracy and a place that belongs to all of them. So why has the McGuinty government stood quietly by while the OMB approved a super high-rise condo development on Bloor Street, which will cast an ugly blight over the view of this historic Legislature?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Yes, that will go to the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question. Our government is committed to protect heritage and heritage sites across the province. Speaker, let me read a statement here, through you, to the honourable member: "The primary Legislative Building is a listed property and is not an Ontario Heritage Act-designated property. It is listed on the register of properties of cultural heritage value or interest maintained by Toronto, pursuant to section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act...."

Since 2005 we have strengthened the Ontario Heritage Act and we believe the best decision will be local government's, which is the municipal government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Last fall, the NDP urged the Ministers of Culture and of Municipal Affairs to take some action on this very serious issue. While the Speaker's office and individual members spoke out against the development, the McGuinty government refused—refused—to even participate in the Ontario Municipal Board hearing. New Democrats are prepared, at this moment, to support legislation to protect the view and heritage of Ontario's Legislature. We all know that a heritage building includes the views and the vistas of any said property. What we're prepared to do includes supporting legislation, consenting to legislation that would have swift passage in this Legislature, if the government is prepared to bring such a bill forward.

My question is simple: Is the McGuinty government prepared, finally, to do the right thing and—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you again for the question. We believe the municipality is in the best position to make decisions about local heritage sites. Let me repeat: This is why in 2005 we strengthened the Ontario Heritage Act, to hand these municipalities the tools they need to protect heritage sites in their community. We believe this is the best decision and this is why we strengthened the act in 2005.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. Ontarians know better than anybody how precious clean, safe drinking water is to our families and to our communities. They rely on your ministry, municipalities and their local public health units to ensure that water is protected and that swift actions are taken if there's even the slightest cause of concern. On Tuesday, when speaking about our proposed Water Opportunities Act, the leader of the third party raised the alarm about the quality of drinking water in four Ontario communities: Blind River, White River, Chatham and Wallaceburg. Would the minister tell the residents of these communities whether they need to be worried about their drinking water?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I appreciate the question from the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. In fact, none of the communities that were mentioned by the leader of the third party currently have a boil-water advisory in place. All advisories associated with the four systems have been resolved and were of a short-term nature due to low exceedences or water main breaks. The only exception is Blind River, which was requiring treatment upgrades that were completed back in 2007. The drinking water advisory remained in place into 2009, until the system could provide proof that the annual average of THMs were under the Ontario drinking water quality standard.

We want to be clear to the residents of these four communities that they have an abundance of caution in our system and that their water is safe to drink.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Being the member who represents White River and Blind River, I want to tell you that the province of Ontario, as you know, has provided huge capital expenditures on both those water systems to bring them up to standard. I know the residents of these communities can be assured that their drinking water is safe, that the boil-water advisories were issued in an abundance of caution and that they were lifted as soon as it was confirmed that everything was safe.

Currently, we are marking the 10th anniversary of Walkerton, a tragic reminder of how sacred clean drinking water is. The Walkerton water tragedy sparked a massive transformation in how drinking water is protected in Ontario. Ontario went from a time when critical information was falling through the cracks in the system

to being ranked as the best province in Canada for drinking water protection.

How does Ontario's drinking water safety net protect Ontario families?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Once again, thank you to the member. First of all, we've implemented all of Justice O'Connor's recommendations from the Walkerton inquiry. As a matter of fact, we've taken the following actions: drinking water standards and tough inspections by hiring 119 dedicated drinking water inspectors that did not exist at the time that the Walkerton tragedy happened; standards are met across this province in well over 99% of all the tests that are conducted on an ongoing basis; the Clean Water Act, protecting the sources of our drinking water; and the water protection committees are at work right now to make sure that plans are in place to make that happen in the very near future.

We have implemented the toughest training and certification rules in North America for operators of our drinking water systems. We've created the Walkerton Clean Water Centre, which so far has done more than 23,000 new and existing—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question?

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Acting Premier. Ontario has a long history as a leader in science and technology and your government likes to claim some of the credit for that. Ontario is home to Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., a world leader in the nuclear industry. Ontario's nuclear industry provides 50,000 highly skilled, highly paid jobs.

Acting Premier, why is your government so silent on the history of AECL and Ontario's nuclear industry?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I really welcome this question, because I want to tell you that it's time for this country to get a federal government in place that's willing to stand behind the nuclear industry in this country. This province is investing billions of dollars in a refurbishment of our nuclear units. This province is engaged in a procurement process to purchase two new nuclear units.

We need our federal government, like national governments around the world, to stand behind the nuclear industry. You need to put in a call to Stephen Harper to tell him how important the 70,000 jobs in the nuclear industry are to us here in Ontario and to every Canadian.

This government stands behind the nuclear industry. It's time for the federal government to provide some backstop to this very critical industry in this country.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: What a load. Acting Premier, your government's lack of leadership and on-again, off-again decision on new-build nuclear at Darlington has contributed complete uncertainty—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The ministers will please come to order.

Please continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That has contributed uncertainty around the future of AECL. Your Premier, who wanted to play Pontius Pilate in the André Marin affair, can't wash his hands of this one. The nuclear industry in Canada is Ontario's nuclear industry, and Ontario needs new-build nuclear and AECL is prepared to deliver.

Minister, what is your government going to do to support this important industry that adds $6 billion per year to Ontario's economy? Ontario's nuclear industry is Canada's nuclear industry. What are you doing to show leadership?

Hon. Brad Duguid: This government stands with the men and women who work across Ontario and across Canada in the nuclear industry. Some 70,000 jobs are at stake here. We need you to stand up to the federal government, to tell them they ought to make the same commitment that we're providing to those 70,000 men and women in this industry. We're standing behind that industry. We're investing billions of dollars in refurbishment. We're purchasing two new nuclear units, but it can't be done without the backing of the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister.

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Mr. John Yakabuski: Were they on sale at Future Shop?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew, I know, understands the standing orders: (a) He should be listening to the answer, and (b) if he is dissatisfied with the answer, he should be filing a late show.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Every country around the world that has a nuclear industry has the backing of their national government. It's what is required to make these things happen: to ensure that there's a competitive price; to ensure that the challenges that come with these transactions can be mitigated. All we're asking is for our federal government to do what has been done in the past, to do what other—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

RETIREMENT HOMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. This minister, this government and seniors' organizations know that sprinklers should be mandatory in every retirement home. Groups at committee hearings spoke of the need for sprinklers; the fire marshal, the fire chiefs, advocacy groups, the coroner, even insurance companies call for mandatory sprinkler systems in every retirement home. Just because the retirement home closest to your family was built before 1998 shouldn't mean that your mother or father should be put at risk.

In the face of mounting evidence and support for mandatory sprinkler systems, why are the McGuinty Liberals refusing to make all seniors' safety a priority?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: The safety of our seniors is a high priority for us. That's why, for the first time in the history of the province, we have legislation before the House to regulate retirement homes. Part of that legislation is to set safety standards—care standards and safety standards. The member will know that part of the legislation is that, if passed, we then begin discussion on the establishment of those safety standards. My colleague the minister responsible for the fire code has indicated that no door has been closed on that.

So I would say to the member, if the legislation is passed, part of that will be to establish safety standards. It's all about making our seniors safer. That's what this legislation is all about, and there's a logical next step in that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary, the member from Nickel Belt.

M^me^ France Gélinas: Bill 21 does not afford safety to seniors; it fails seniors. All the stakeholders will agree that the failure to limit the amount of care that can be delivered in a retirement home puts seniors at risk. The regulatory authority that you want to create hands over oversight of the industry that will put profits ahead of all else. I have been waiting for three years to get this piece of legislation. Why all of a sudden is the government in such a rush, willing to compromise the democratic process to rush this flawed, dangerous bill through?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: It's not flawed and it's not being rushed through. I would just remind the public that four years ago we said we would do this; three years ago we had consultations across the province. We indicated we'd be introducing legislation; we introduced legislation to the House. I will say that all three parties voted for the legislation at second reading. We then sent it to committee. The committee sat for two days at hearings, but only used one day but it accommodated everybody who wanted to speak. I reject somewhat categorically that we're rushing this through. Four years of work; we introduced the bill several months ago; both opposition parties voted for the bill. We sent it to committee and everybody who wanted to come and be heard was allowed to come and be heard. The advice I get is that it's time to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Glen R. Murray: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. My riding of Toronto Centre is at the heart of downtown Toronto. Many of my constituents prefer to hop on the streetcar, subway or bus to get around the city than to take their cars and sit in gridlock. I've heard from some of my constituents that they would like to see a more modern, comprehensive transit system that could easily take them to all parts of the city. The delay in funding of the big five transit projects, as announced in the 2010 budget, has made many of my constituents wonder whether these projects are at risk.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the member for Toronto Centre is very committed to public transit, and I know he'll want to reassure his constituents that Metrolinx has worked very hard with our municipal partners both in York and in Toronto to get a plan in place that's rational and doable and that will allow the big five transit projects to be completed while slowing down the cash flow of $4 billion in the first five years. That report was presented at the Metrolinx board yesterday. It was endorsed unanimously. We're reviewing it, and I look forward to getting started on these projects.

The plan recommends that we continue working on the Sheppard line immediately, we begin immediately on Eglinton and York Viva and we start to do planning and design work on Finch and Sheppard, and finish those in the 2015-20 period.

This is a $9.5-billion investment. I was at the Canadian Urban Transit Association yesterday—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I know my constituents will be pleased to hear that Metrolinx has a plan to move forward and get these important projects constructed.

Minister, Metrolinx has said that the Finch and Scarborough lines are going to be staged and construction will begin in 2015. The delay in their construction has been interpreted by some as a lack of commitment on the government's part to these two lines. The Scarborough Rapid Transit and Finch LRT are critical to help connect from those areas to the downtown and other parts of the city.

Could the minister please provide us with more details as to the government's commitment to these two projects?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said earlier, we're committed to all five of these projects in the next 10 years. Metrolinx is going to, in fact, be doing important work on the Finch and Scarborough lines in the first five years. What they will be doing is some design work, engineering, property acquisition and, in fact, will allocate $70 million for the Finch line and $100 million for the Scarborough line in the first five years. That work will be going ahead.

We're also going to be ordering the light rail vehicles for all four LRT lines, including Finch, in the coming months. Those are very concrete examples of the go-ahead. Metrolinx will be starting construction of the joint Sheppard-Scarborough carhouse.

I wanted to say that I was in Ottawa yesterday at the Canadian Urban Transit Association. Transit officials from across the country were looking to us, were talking about what's going on in Ontario, and they know that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

CEMETERIES

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. It concerns the Mount Pleasant

Group of Cemeteries. A number of concerned Toronto residents made a submission to the Premier, the Attorney General and to your ministry with concerns about the administration of this body. On December 4, 2009, your ministry promised to consider their submission and to respond early in the new year. More than five months have passed without a response. Please tell me when these Toronto residents will receive a response?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'm glad to respond to the member regarding the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries. First, let me just say that I understand that the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries is working to strengthen its community outreach to better inform residents, including publishing a report of their annual activities on their website, which is a great thing.

In terms of governance, I am advised that the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries will commence advertising board openings as they arise.

Thirdly, I encourage both the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries and the Moore Park Residents' Association to work together to reach a mutually agreeable resolution.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I just want to clarify that the member for Durham asked your predecessor about this important issue last September, and at that time he asked about what measures the ministry was taking to increase transparency and public accountability. Today, though, Minister, what we're asking is when you are going to provide a response to the request that was made several months ago.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Again, I thank the member for the question. Yes, we are looking at that. But again, let me just say that I do encourage both the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries and the Moore Park Residents' Association to work together to reach a mutually agreeable resolution.

1130

TAXATION

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Acting Premier. I have here over 3,000 signed cards from First Nations citizens in northwestern Ontario demanding that the McGuinty Liberal government maintain the First Nations' point-of-sale exemption from the harmonized sales tax.

When the McGuinty Liberals announced, with much fanfare, the HST, you also announced a number of HST exemptions. Later, when you faced political criticism of the HST, the McGuinty Liberals suddenly and unilaterally decided to exempt newspapers, the Tim Hortons $4 lunch and new homes costing under $400,000 from the HST.

What these First Nations citizens want to know is this: The McGuinty Liberals had time to consider and implement exemptions from the HST; how could you forget about the point-of-sale exemption for—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Acting Premier?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: As I've said to the House before, and as people throughout the province of Ontario know, my colleague Minister Wilkinson and I have confirmed the direction of the Premier. We stand shoulder to shoulder with First Nations. We have told the federal government that we wish to maintain the point-of-sale exemption for First Nations in the province of Ontario. The memorandum of agreement confirms many, many months of work. The Premier's letter, the Minister of Finance, my colleague Minister Wilkinson, myself and my predecessor are all confirming, and we are calling on Prime Minister Harper and the federal government to continue the point-of-sale exemption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I hear the words of the minister, but here is the reality: You, the McGuinty government, have the unilateral authority to decide what shall be exempted from the HST and what isn't. Economists who have looked at your agreement over the HST have concluded that you have the financial room to continue the HST exemption at point of sale for First Nations and you have the unilateral authority.

Again, what these First Nations citizens want to know is this: How could you put in place HST exemptions for buyers of new homes, book purchasers, newspaper readers and coffee shop patrons but, at the same time, completely forget about the point-of-sale exemption from the HST for First Nations?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: There's the issue: On all of the exemptions my colleague touched on, the federal government has agreed. The federal government administers the HST. They must agree to administer this point-of-sale exemption. That's why we've been working with the regional chief, with the grand chiefs, with the chiefs in communities. We stand shoulder to shoulder. We've signed the memorandum of agreement. We are calling on the Prime Minister to maintain the point-of-sale exemption.

I would simply add that there was much heckling from the official opposition during the course of my earlier answer. I'm looking forward to seeing the letters from them that call on Prime Minister Harper to maintain the point-of-sale exemption for First Nations.

HEPATITIS C

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, as you know, yesterday was World Hepatitis Day. In particular, hepatitis C may be considered a very serious virus in that there is no vaccine for it. Hepatitis C is currently the leading cause of chronic liver disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer within the province of Ontario. One in five people with hepatitis C will suffer severe liver damage as a result of the virus.

My constituents recognize the importance of addressing serious illnesses such as hepatitis C. Could the

minister please inform this House of our government's progress in dealing with this debilitating disease?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for her question.

I want to tell you that our government is strongly committed to fighting hepatitis C. Shortly after taking office, we established the Ontario Hepatitis C Secretariat and the Ontario hepatitis C task force. I want to thank the chair of the task force, John Plater, and the entire team for their exceptional work that has guided our strategy to prevent and treat Ontarians with hepatitis C.

In 2005, we launched a sweeping campaign designed to raise awareness through television and newspaper ads, over 100 prevention and educational materials and a website, hepcontario.ca. We've invested in the Ontario hepatitis nursing program to provide nursing support for physicians. There are currently 13 hepatitis support nurses in 11 sites across Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm certainly proud that our government is taking a concerted approach to preventing and treating hepatitis C and I'm sure that my constituents will be pleased to hear this as well.

Last year, we received the Hepatitis C Task Force's recommendations for addressing the concerns of hepatitis C. I understand that their report has served as the foundation for our comprehensive hepatitis C strategy. In light of World Hepatitis Day, could the minister please inform this House of our government's strategy for hepatitis prevention and treatment moving forward?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the opportunity to talk about our government's plans to build a stronger, healthier Ontario. We offer children in elementary school immunizations at no cost to provide protection against hepatitis B and other diseases. This saves each family $580 for that vaccine alone in addition to the $1,000 that is saved by families on our other vaccines offered to Ontario's children at no cost to them.

When it comes to hepatitis C, we're establishing hepatitis support teams to bring a coordinated, comprehensive approach to helping people affected with hepatitis C through a social outreach program. We're encouraging prevention through a harm reduction approach, which evidence suggests is one of the most effective ways to reduce infections.

I'm proud of the program—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Health. I recently received a letter from a constituent who needs frequent blood tests to control a serious health condition. Before you got into power and started bleeding the system dry, these blood tests were done efficiently by a local clinic just a 20-minute walk away. She got the results right away and got the medication the same day. These days, her local clinic doesn't offer this service. She has to drive over an hour to Kingston General Hospital.

Minister, was it worth destroying this woman's local care so that you could set up your friends in a LHIN and add a new layer of wasteful bureaucracy?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: On the issue of lab tests, I will be happy to speak to that more in the supplementary.

Your attacks on the LHINs continue despite the fact that we know and people in this province know that the integration of health care services is a key part of our strategy to improve health care in this province. In the past, we have had siloed services when it came to health care. Knitting those services together so that people can access the right kinds of health support at the right time, as close to home as possible, is the future of health care in this province.

The party opposite wants to go back to a system where all of the decisions were made in the minister's office in the Ministry of Health. That is not the right place for decisions to be made. The closer to the community decisions—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, you talk about your LHINs as if they're helping people get local care and providing integration. Instead of performing blood tests, our health care system is just plain bleeding. Blood test requisitions from family doctors are no longer accepted at the hospital, so so much for your integration.

Let's face the facts: Since taking over this office, you've waged a war against rural health care providers. First, you snuffed out local clinics, adding layers of wasteful LHIN bureaucracy; now you're going to decimate small, rural pharmacies, which provide much of Ontario's front-line care.

In a document prepared by your office, you were warned that your reforms were going to hurt pharmacists. Why are you so adamant in your attack against good health care in rural Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would welcome the opportunity to talk with the member opposite when we have more time so I could tell him about the great things we're doing for rural health care in this province. We have opened family health teams in rural communities right across this province. We're on our way to opening nurse practitioner clinics in rural and urban areas across this province.

When it comes to health care, we are committed to providing health care for all Ontarians regardless of where they live, but when the member opposite talks about pharmacies, I cannot help myself. I have to say, why are you standing on the side of higher profits for pharmacies and against the people who need access to lower-priced generic drugs?

1140

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Labour. In 2008 your government, after years of

lobbying, gave part-time college workers the right to vote on whether or not to join a union. It's too bad that you didn't include the right to have the votes counted. The workers have voted, but part-time academic staff have now been waiting for over 17 months and part-time support staff have been waiting for over six months to have their ballots counted. The colleges are currently using an expensive army of lawyers to exploit a loophole in the legislation to deny part-time college workers their rights.

Minister, the colleges are making a mockery of your legislation. When will the votes be counted?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I thank the member very much for the question. I'll just speak to the question directly first and say, as he knows, the issue is before the Ontario Labour Relations Board. It is an independent adjudicative tribunal. We don't interfere in their day-to-day operations; that's not what we do.

But I will say to the member that our government is committed to promoting a very stable and constructive labour relations climate here in Ontario, and that's why we did introduce the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, allowing part-time and sessional college workers the right to bargain collectively for the first time, I say to the member.

The new act modernizes our colleges' collective bargaining to provide a fair and productive labour relations environment, to better serve the needs of students and the college system.

I say that to the member. This is good news. Now allow the labour board to do their work.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They have been waiting for 17 months. I remind you: Warren Thomas, the president of OPSEU, says the following: "A law that has no practical use is no law at all." He's right, and I agree with him.

The colleges are manipulating the system, and they are using our money and your complacency to do it. The $5,000 per day that the hearings cost would be better spent on our students. This money could be used to lower class sizes, reduce tuition, provide retraining programs and hire qualified staff.

When will you tell the colleges that this delay is a waste of resources and that they must let democracy take its course and count the ballots?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The member's question asks me to interfere with the Ontario Labour Relations Board, and I say to the member I will not do that. I will not do that.

But what I will do, and what this government will continue to do, is enhance strong labour relations here in the province of Ontario, and that is what we have done over the last six and a half years. Again to the member, that's why we introduced the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, allowing part-time and sessional college workers to be able to bargain collectively for the first time.

We are going to continue to strengthen our labour relations here in the province of Ontario. We know it's good for our economy. We know it's good for our workers and our employees. We have an excellent record, and we will continue to strengthen and build on that record.

TAXATION

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question this morning is to the Minister of Revenue. Jack Mintz states that our tax package will bring $47 billion in new investment and create almost 600,000 jobs in Ontario.

But, Minister, some municipalities are concerned about increasing costs, including my municipality in the city of Peterborough. Municipalities provide important services many Ontarians rely on, including transit services, water and sewer services, and most importantly, road repair.

I know the Conservatives increased the burden on municipalities by downloading through their famous who-got-done-in exercise, and I know that our government is easing that burden by uploading these services. What will the HST mean for municipalities in Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my colleague for the question, because I know municipalities have been delighted to learn that they will now receive the most generous municipal rebate, when it comes to the provincial portion of the HST, of any province in Canada. That rebate is going to be some 78% of the provincial portion of the HST. Their rebate from the federal government will remain.

What does that mean in Peterborough? For example, the finance department in your fine city, I say to the member, reviewed the city's spending in 2008 to find the potential cost or savings if the harmonized sales tax had been in place. They found the city would have saved $600,000 last year. That is a good example of how under our tax reforms we are continuing to upload for municipalities.

Another example is London Transit, which is holding off the purchase of their new buses because by doing it after July 1—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Leal: General Electric recently made a $100-million investment in their Peterborough facility that will create 33 new high-skilled jobs and retain an additional 75 jobs.

I'd like to quote GE president and CEO Elyse Allan, who said, "It really was a recognition of how competitive Ontario has become on the global stage and our ability as a global company to invest here in Ontario, to grow here in Ontario"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Minister.

Mr. Jeff Leal: —"to grow here in Ontario and to have the ability"—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You sat; the minister stood. Minister.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Actually, they opened there in 1892. They found out how to create wealth in the 19th

century and in the 20th century for the good people of Peterborough. They just landed the largest large-motor contract in the history of their company. They are exporting the most advanced large motors in the world to the People's Republic of China. They have found a contract that allows them to compete and win in the global economy, and because—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Because the member for Peterborough got cut off, we'd support a unanimous consent motion to have him get another question.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed?

Mr. John Yakabuski: No.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members please take your seats.

Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion 23. All those in favour will rise and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Murray, Glen R.
Albanese, Laura	Fonseca, Peter	Orazietti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Gerretsen, John	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bentley, Christopher	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Qaadri, Shafiq
Best, Margarett	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Rick	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Crozier, Bruce	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dombrowsky, Leona	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hampton, Howard	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Tabuns, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 45; the nays are 21.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 71(c), the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has filed notice of a reasoned amendment for the motion for second reading of Bill 72, An Act to enact the Water Opportunities Act, 2010 and to amend other Acts in respect of water conservation and other matters. The order for second reading of Bill 72 may therefore not be called today.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1155 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Margarett R. Best: It's my pleasure to rise in the Legislature today to welcome representatives of Canadian Tire's Jumpstart charitable program. They are in the east members' gallery with us this afternoon. This is an organization which aids disadvantaged youth to get involved in sports.

I am pleased to welcome Freida Rubletz, who's the employee engagement personnel and chapter manager, and Althea Evans, a business analyst. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Mr. David Zimmer: It's my pleasure to introduce Joyce Thompson, who's the founding executive director of Rotary Cheshire Homes here in Toronto, and her husband, Jim, and Cindy Accardi, the executive director of Rotary Cheshire Homes and the Canadian Helen Keller Centre.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Last week, the Tillsonburg Chamber of Commerce held its 12th annual Awards of Excellence to honour businesses in our community for their success and to recognize the contributions to our community and our environment.

The entrepreneur of the year was a new business, Anastacia's Spa, which through their expansion has contributed to making Broadway Street even more beautiful.

Johnson Controls won the industrial achievement. The plant management submitted the nomination to recognize the contributions of employees who not only helped them stay in business during the tough economic times but expand—a great achievement through great team work.

Mill Tales Inn won the Tillsonburg Award of Excellence, and I want to commend the owners, Gord and Laura Lee Craig, on creating a great restaurant while preserving a piece of our history, the former Tillson pea and barley mill.

Another new business in Tillsonburg, Tillsonburg Future Road Solutions, won the environmental award not

only for their unique organic de-icing product but also their commitment to the environment in the way the business is run.

Coward Pharmacy was recognized for business achievement, and I commend them on the work they do for their clients every day. I was pleased to attend their recent public information session and receive the many petitions that their clients have signed to protect small pharmacies like Coward's.

Radio stations Easy 101—new country—AM1510, and Country 107.3 won an award recognizing their community service. This family-run business contributes to so many events and causes within the community. They are very well deserving of this award.

I want to congratulate all the winners and the many businesses that were nominated and thank them all for their contributions to the town of Tillsonburg and the great riding of Oxford.

NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

Mr. Ted McMeekin: May 25 is National Missing Children's Day. I feel very strongly that this is an important day to recognize here in the Legislative Assembly. In 2008, 20,526 precious children went missing in the province of Ontario alone. As a parent, I certainly understand the anguish of that.

I support the Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign. It will bring awareness to the community regarding the issue of missing children and how we can safeguard our kids from predators, be they online or on the streets. The green ribbon has become a symbol of hope for families wanting the safe return of their children. While the Legislative Assembly is not sitting on May 25, I nonetheless want to acknowledge the Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign and May 25 as National Missing Children's Day.

I am pleased to say that our government is dedicated to ensuring families and communities are supported should a child go missing, as evidenced by the very successful Amber Alert program. Yes, there's always more work to do, but that said, I applaud Child Find Ontario for organizing the 19th annual Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign and know that all members of the Legislative Assembly do, as well.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Frank Klees: May is National Physiotherapy Month across Canada. Over 7,000 Ontario physiotherapists practise in hospitals, community health centres, long-term-care homes, retirement homes, home care, community clinics and industry.

Access to physiotherapy facilities by hospital inpatients and outpatients is an insured service under the Canada Health Act. Evidence shows the effectiveness of physiotherapy in the treatment of chronic illnesses and post-accident and surgery treatment to enhance patients' timely return to their daily lives. Studies have also shown that access to physiotherapy services reduces the demand on hospital emergency rooms and the length of hospital stays.

Yet to cut short-term health costs, access to publicly funded physiotherapy is dramatically declining in Ontario, with hospitals downsizing their outpatient physiotherapy clinics and CCACs applying severe restrictions on the eligibility and number of treatments per patient. Despite promises to the contrary, the Ministry of Health continues to exclude physiotherapists from family health units.

National Physiotherapy Month is about showing Ontario physiotherapists how much we value their contributions to our health care system. On their behalf, I call on the McGuinty government to enhance patient access to publicly funded physiotherapy services.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

M^me^ France Gélinas: I was waiting for the member from Newmarket–Aurora to do his presentation because mine is also about physiotherapy. May being National Physiotherapy Month, I want to thank all of my fellow 7,000 physiotherapists for the very important work that they do.

Physiotherapists help people who have bone, joint and muscle trouble. For a lot of people, total hip replacement surgery alone is of very little value if it is not followed by physiotherapy. The pain may be gone, but it is the physiotherapy that will make you walk, be functional and allow you to return to your normal life, referring to the commercial, no matter what your normal life looks like. Access to physiotherapy reduces the demand on emergency rooms, reduces the length of stay in hospital, and reduces the need for expensive drugs. But as the member said, access to publicly funded physiotherapy is dramatically declining.

Every MPP now has a copy of the Ontario Health Coalition paper report, and that shows that many hospitals have closed or downsized their outpatient physiotherapy clinics. When I was in Picton, two people came to the hearing. They are forced to do without physiotherapy, although they need it, because their hospital has cut that service in order to balance the books. That's not right. Physiotherapists deserve better.

1310

DEAF-BLIND AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. David Zimmer: I'm very pleased to rise today to recognize Rotary Cheshire Homes and the Canadian Helen Keller Centre, located in my riding of Willowdale.

June marks Deaf-Blind Awareness Month in Ontario, and on June 16, Rotary Cheshire Homes and the Canadian Helen Keller Centre will hold their eighth annual JuneFest, a celebration to promote greater public awareness of persons living with dual sensory loss and the organizations that support and provide services to them.

I'd like to make a special point of recognizing Joyce Thompson, in the members' gallery. She is the co-

founder and former executive director of Rotary Cheshire Homes.

More commonly known as JT, Joyce has spent a lifetime working tirelessly in service to the deaf-blind community. Her level of commitment, passion and devotion is inspirational. Despite being diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, Joyce continues to be an activist leader and to provide yeoman service to her community.

Joyce is a person of special note and worthiness. To honour her accomplishments, Joyce will be awarded the first JuneFest Award of Excellence on June 16 here in Toronto. Please join me in congratulating her, welcoming her and thanking her for her years of service.

FOOD BANKS

Mr. Robert Bailey: The Ontario Association of Food Banks reports that food bank usage in Ontario has increased by 20% in the last year alone. This means that roughly 375,000 Ontarians—our friends and neighbours—were forced to turn to their local food bank every month in 2009, which is an all-time high for our province. Yet, unfortunately, food donations are decreasing. In 2008 alone they decreased by more than one million pounds.

However, while food banks struggle to provide for those in need, Ontario farmers, who are also struggling, dispose of or plough back into the fields more than 25 million pounds of fresh, nutritious food. The unfortunate fact is that farmers often cannot afford the costs incurred to collect, process and deliver their unsold produce to local food banks, despite a clear desire to do so by the industry.

Yesterday, I introduced a bill, entitled the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, that, if passed, will provide a significant tax credit to farmers who donate unsold produce and other excess food.

I believe that this bill presents a concrete solution that will not only assist local food banks, but also local farmers and struggling Ontarians. It is my hope that the bill will help neutralize the cost placed on local farmers to collect and donate this excess produce, while at the same time providing a significant incentive for them to do so.

JUMPSTART

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I rise in the House today to speak about the partnership between the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families Jumpstart program. Working together, they will assist children from low-income families to become involved in sports and recreation.

On May 29, Jumpstart will hold its second annual Jumpstart Day. In York South–Weston, we have two Canadian Tire stores that can be involved in bringing about change through this program and getting children into the game.

All children should have the opportunity to be involved in organized sports and recreation, learning great teamwork skills as they grow. Providing children with great recreational programs decreases their involvement in street activity while increasing confidence, motivation and camaraderie.

As a community-based, not-for-profit organization, the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families has a mission to keep communities strong in times of difficulty. While one in three families find they cannot afford equipment and enrolment fees, with the help of Jumpstart, they can.

The Ministry of Health Promotion supports the initiatives of the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families Jumpstart program, which has been able to give more than 216,000 kids in financial need across the country a chance to play since its launch in February 2005—in the Toronto north chapter alone, 3,119 children over the past four years.

I would like to thank the Jumpstart program and the Ministry of Health Promotion for helping York South–Weston to be a stronger and healthier community.

BRIAN TARDIF

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It is my great honour to recognize a good friend of mine and a true inspiration to my community of Ottawa and to Ottawa Centre, and that is Brian Tardif.

Brian will be celebrating his 25th anniversary as executive director of Citizen Advocacy of Ottawa. Citizen Advocacy is a charitable organization that enhances the lives of persons with disabilities through advocacy and support by increasing personal choice and community participation.

Brian has been working with Citizen Advocacy since 1985, and his passion for the voluntary non-profit sector spans more than three decades. Brian's dedication and leadership for people with disabilities and Citizen Advocacy is truly inspiring. Brian strongly believes in the principles of inclusion and valued social roles for people with disabilities as well as a strong and vibrant volunteer sector.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Brian for his continued commitment to my community of Ottawa and for all the work he does on behalf of every one of us. He is also engaged with Families Matter Co-op; 1 Community Place, which he was instrumental in creating; and the United Way.

Brian is a mentor, a coach, a leader, a friend and an all around great guy. Thank you, Brian, for all your service to Ottawa.

YORK UNIVERSITY

Mr. Mario Sergio: In the lead-up to Earth Day 2010, York University released a campus-wide report on sustainability with a strategy to reduce its ecological

footprint that goes beyond the usual approaches to being green.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work the students, faculty and staff at York University have undertaken. They should indeed serve as a model for sustainability for college and university campuses across Ontario.

York University has become a leader in sustainability, with innovative curriculum, campus operations, green buildings and the commitment to helping shape sustainable livelihoods.

President Mamdouh Shoukri's sustainability council has charted an innovative curriculum that emphasizes the university's vital relationship with the greater Toronto area, produces some of the most advanced research and thinking on sustainability, and educates and trains the next generation of sustainability leaders. The strategy developed by the sustainability council illustrates the type of approach that should be adopted across Ontario's urban centres where social, environmental and economic concerns are mutually addressed.

On Earth Day, York launched its zero waste program, which will divert 65% of campus waste from landfill sites by 2013. The university's Unplug initiative has already decreased campus energy use dramatically. It led to a 3.55% reduction in energy consumption over the Family Day weekend, amounting to 22,729 kilowatt hours.

I appreciate the work that York University is doing with respect to sustainability.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ELIMINATION OF AUTOMATIC TIPS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 ÉLIMINANT L'IMPOSITION AUTOMATIQUE DE POURBOIRES

Mr. Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to eliminate automatic tips in restaurants / Projet de loi 81, Loi éliminant l'imposition automatique de pourboires dans les restaurants.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. David Caplan: Eliminating automatic tips, 2010, or EAT, prevents restaurant owners from charging automatic service charges in restaurants across Ontario.

The legislation has one exception. It excludes private functions and banquets. In this case, restaurant owners and operators would still be able to charge automatic service charges when dealing with private gatherings and banquets.

1320

TORONTO CITY COUNCIL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE CONSEIL MUNICIPAL DE LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Mr. Sergio moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Legislative Assembly Act / Projet de loi 82, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Mario Sergio: I'll try and be short. The bill amends the City of Toronto Act, 2006, and the Legislative Assembly Act. The City of Toronto Act, 2006, is amended to restructure the city council by limiting the number of members to 32 and by establishing a board of control to oversee all financial and personal matters. The act is also amended to limit the number of consecutive terms of office held by a member of council to two, to shorten the nomination incumbent period of an election, and to require members of council to resign before running for other government office.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Motions? The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Do you understand the motion? All those in favour?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Carried.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You asked for unanimous consent. I said no.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All right. I didn't hear the no, but I do now.

Motions?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 30 be waived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): No, you didn't get unanimous consent.

Mr. Frank Klees: You can try again.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): You can try again, but we can't go on forever.

Hon. Mr. Fonseca: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To do what?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's to waive notice.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Do you understand the motion?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): He just wants the notice waived.

Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed? No. I heard a no.

PETITIONS

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Mr. Frank Klees: This is one of the most important sessions of the day, when we get to share the people's will with this House. I have a petition here to the Parliament of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas there are more than 1,000 children in the public and Catholic schools in York region who are on the wait-list for speech-language therapy; and

"Whereas there are thousands more in a similar circumstance across the province; and

"Whereas these are children who are struggling with speech and language disorders, which can have serious consequences without timely intervention; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Central Community Care Access Centre to assign speech-language pathologists to provide therapy to children on the wait-list, but the McGuinty government has substantially cut funding to the CCAC for speech-language pathology, with the result that children are not being released from the wait-list for treatment; and

"Whereas parents are being told to pay for private therapy if they want timely treatment for their children, but many parents cannot afford the cost of private therapy, with the result that these children are at risk of increased severity of their difficulties, impacting their social and academic skills;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty, the minister responsible for children and youth services, the Minister of Health and LTC and the Minister of Education to intervene immediately to ensure that the Central CCAC develop a plan that will ensure that the more than 1,000 children in need of speech-language therapy in York region" and thousands more in regions of the province "receive the necessary treatment."

I'm pleased to affix my signature in full support of this petition.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^me^ France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of the riding of Sudbury.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under" certain conditions; and

"Whereas" since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the clerks' table with Lars.

ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

"Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational requirements and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found $12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area."

I agree with the petition and I will sign it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

I'm pleased to affix my signature.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^me^ France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Kingston, London and Oshawa.

"Whereas a company's resumption of production with replacement workers during a legal strike puts undue tensions and divisions on a community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers during a strike."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the clerks' table with page Jacob.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas multiple sclerosis (MS) is a debilitating disease affecting a great number of people in Ontario; and

"Whereas there has been a new treatment discovery called the liberation treatment, which addresses chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCVI) and that has been seen to provide relief for many MS sufferers,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario invest in research regarding this new treatment and make it available to victims of MS in Ontario as a listed procedure in a timely manner."

As I agree with this petition, I will sign it and send it to the table with page Ana.

POWER PLANT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the good people of Oakville.

"Whereas the province of Ontario, through the Ontario Energy Board, has selected a location for a gas-fired electrical generating power station within three kilometres of 16 schools and more than 11,000 homes; and

"Whereas the Oakville-Clarkson airshed is already one of the most polluted in Canada; and

"Whereas no independent environmental assessment has been completed for this proposed building location; and

"Whereas Ontario has experienced a significant reduction in demand for electrical power; and

"Whereas a recent accident at a power plant in Connecticut demonstrated the dangers that nearby residents face;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to immediately rescind the existing plan to build a power plant at or near the current ... location on ... Royal Windsor Drive in Oakville and initiate a complete review of area power needs and potential building sites, including environmental assessments and a realistic assessment of required danger zone buffer areas."

I'm pleased to sign this and pass it to my page, Lars.

1330

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have a number of petitions here on behalf of a number of residents from the area of Timmins. It reads as follows:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Xstrata Copper Canada has announced it will permanently cease operation of its copper and zinc metallurgical plants at the Kidd metallurgical site in Timmins on May 1, 2010; and

"Whereas Xstrata plans to continue extracting ore from the Kidd mine site in Timmins until 2017 and is making plans to ship this ore out of province for refining and processing; and

"Whereas 670 employees will be directly impacted as a result of this decision, and numerous commercial and retail establishments both small and large will be affected by this decision; and

"Whereas several other communities throughout northeastern Ontario will suffer from the devastating consequences of this decision;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to protect the natural resources of this province, our industry and our jobs; and

"Furthermore we call upon the government of Ontario to take a firm stand and finally call a halt to the pillaging of our wealth by foreign-owned companies. If the leaders of Newfoundland and Labrador can do it, then so should the Ontario government."

I have signed that petition, and I send it over with Stig, who is going to take all of these wonderful petitions to the table.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Joe Dickson: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the worldwide demand for water is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

"Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from the poor water regulation practices of the former Conservative government; and

"Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province's ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government's plan to introduce a new Water Oppor-

tunities Act to take advantage of the province's expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water."

I will attach my signature to that and pass it to Jacob.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario's history; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13% sales tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: coffee; newspapers and magazines; gas at the pumps; home heating oil and electricity; postage stamps; haircuts; dry cleaning; home renovations; veterinary care; and arena ice and soccer field rentals;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's ... economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario's hard-working families."

I agree with this petition. I affix my signature to it and send it down with Mary, my page.

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: "Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over $400,000, fast food..., electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than $30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, veterinarian bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

"Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers."

I agree with the petition, and I will sign it.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Bailey: This is a further petition from the residents of the fine riding of Sarnia–Lambton.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario's history; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will again increase taxes with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13% sales tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as ... gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, and arena ice and soccer field rentals;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and send it down with Mary.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

CAPPING TOP PUBLIC SECTOR SALARIES ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT DES HAUTS TRAITEMENTS DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

Ms. Horwath moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to cap the top public sector salaries / Projet de loi 57, Loi plafonnant les hauts traitements du secteur public.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 98, Ms. Horwath, you have up to 12 minutes.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I wanted to start out by saying what this bill is. Fundamentally, this bill is about improving accountability and oversight in the public sector, something that New Democrats have been calling for for quite some time, something that the people of this province have been calling for for quite some time.

Why? Because we need to make sure that our public dollars are invested wisely, that every cent that we take in is invested in a way that meets the needs of the people of this province and meets those needs effectively and efficiently; because every single dollar that is wasted could be invested in the services that people need, services like long-term-care beds, services like front-line nursing care, services like the building of better schools,

services like keeping our hydro rates more affordable in this province. These are the kinds of services that people expect their tax dollars to go towards.

Unfortunately, what we see happening more and more is a greater proportion of those tax dollars going into public sector salaries of top executives. I'm not talking about the everyday personal support worker, several of whom were with me today in a media conference in the media studio talking about the important work they do. I'm not talking about those folks. I'm talking about the people at the very, very top who are pulling down hundreds of thousands of dollars on an annual basis.

Governments keep promising that they are going to do something to address this situation of the out-of-control top executive salaries in this public sector in Ontario, but it never, ever seems to happen. Instead, those salaries keep climbing and climbing and climbing. We have million-dollar executives right now at our publicly owned electricity companies and sky-high hospital executive CEO salaries as well. It seems this has become the norm in our province, where the people at the very top of these public service organizations and institutions are making millions of dollars.

The bill I'm introducing today is a very simple bill. In fact, it sits on but one piece of paper. One piece of paper contains the entire bill, and it would apply to all of the executives in public sector organizations and the greater public sector in this province. What it does is very simple: It puts a hard cap on the salary of public sector executives. The cap would be, pretty logically, twice the salary of what the Premier of this province makes. That's where the cap would lie. It would equate to two times what Premier McGuinty currently makes. It basically means that the top executives of our public institutions would make a maximum of twice the amount that the president and CEO of the government of the province of Ontario makes. That seems pretty logical. That seems pretty fair.

1340

The bill would apply to all executives in the public sector, as I said, organizations that are currently subject to the sunshine list. This is when this issue gets a great deal of attention, when the sunshine list is published and we see yet again, year after year, the climbing salaries of these top executives. The executives on that list range from organizations like the Ontario public service itself to crown agencies like Hydro One, OPG, universities and of course hospitals, as I've already mentioned.

The Premier's salary right now sits at about $209,000. In effect, doing the straight math, the cap would be about $418,000. That's almost half a million dollars—half a million dollars. Certainly, half a million dollars to lead a public service organization in this province is plenty of compensation. The bill itself would come into effect as these salaries are negotiated. We wouldn't expect to break any current contracts. That's something that simply cannot be done, and we understand that. But what it would do, going forward, is cap those salaries in the future.

The government likes to tell us that nurses, teachers and front-line workers are the ones who should bear the brunt of freezes for salaries, that they should actually voluntarily freeze their own salaries. Yet public sector executives will still be raking it in. They're still going to be raking in huge increases every single year. The government is pretending that they're doing something about this. They have Bill 16, which they claim freezes the salaries of executives and managers, but as we saw when that bill was scrutinized, in fact, there are all kinds of loopholes that allow for pay-for-performance bonuses, for example. It's tough talk, but when you look at the legislation itself, the government built in this opportunity to continue to allow these salaries to increase, although not calling it a salary but calling it a performance bonus. We know that if it quacks like a duck and walks like a duck, it's a duck. In fact, it's a raise; it's actually a raise. Whether you want to call it a performance bonus or not, it is a raise. They could get 2%, 3%, 4% or 5% more on a salary that in many cases is already extremely high.

I have to say that anything that allows the salaries to continue to climb is obviously not a freeze. A freeze is a freeze. It reminds me of a kid's game. They're in a certain game that you play, and when the person turns around, you're supposed to freeze. That's what a freeze is: You stop. It's stopped dead in its tracks. It's not something that you allow to continue to creep, creep, creep up. That's why we are where we are now, where we have CEOs making almost a million dollars while nurses are being laid off. That's why we are in this situation where we are now, because the creep has been allowed to continue. It's time to stop. It's time to put a hard cap on those salaries and make sure that those dollars are going into the hands-on care that we want to see happening in Ontario, whether that's hands-on care in the health care sector or whether that's making sure that we have qualified teachers teaching in our schools or providing educational assistants for kids with special needs. Those are the kinds of places that those dollars should go to.

There's another bill that the government brought forward, Bill 46. It takes the same kind of approach to bonuses. It makes hospitals tie their executives' compensation to meeting certain kinds of criteria. In other words, you can only get a raise if you meet certain criteria, one of which is patient satisfaction surveys and a number of other criteria. But what it doesn't do is put a cap or a freeze on the salaries of these CEOs. We've already seen what happens with this kind of system. In fact, the Ottawa Hospital has a CEO who is basically being compensated based on this kind of pay-for-performance type of model. What's happening there? What's happening there is this CEO is making well over $700,000 a year. It's already apparent that this is a failure of a model, that it doesn't keep a cap on those increasing salaries, that it doesn't restrict the spiralling increases that happen year over year.

But what's happening in the meantime? In the meantime, in Ottawa, nurses are being laid off. The hours of care that Ottawa citizens are able to receive from

nursing staff in their hospital is being reduced. Meanwhile, the CEO is walking away with all kinds of great salary and bonuses.

All over the health care system, in fact, this is happening. We see nurses being laid off. We see hospital emergency rooms closing. We see personal support workers struggling just to keep caring for their patients, which is one of the things we heard about today. They're saying, "I don't even want a huge salary increase," these personal support workers. They're saying, "I don't want the money from these CEOs. I want them to have a reasonable amount of pay"—which is not what they get now; it's completely unreasonable—"but those dollars, I'm not asking for in my salary. I'm asking for those dollars to go towards giving me some help to meet the needs of my patients, to meet the needs of the people in the long-term-care facility I'm struggling to provide services to."

That's true public service. These women provided an insight today at my press conference about what true public service is. That's what we have to get back to in this province. It's not about the race to the top, to see how high you can go in terms of your salary as an executive in the public sector. It should be about how much quality you can deliver to the people of this province in terms of the public services they rely on.

We've had intensive care beds closing in places like Leamington. We've had day surgeries slashed in communities like Chatham. Cuts have been made to the breast screening program in London and Cambridge. Day surgery has been cut in Hamilton's St. Joseph's hospital. Ten beds were closed at St. Marys hospital. Renal care is cut in Thunder Bay. Ambulatory care is cut in Sudbury. Elderly patients are waiting for long-term-care beds, waiting sometimes months and months and months. Often, when they get the bed, it's hundreds of kilometres away from their community and their family.

This is not the kind of health care system that people want in this province. What they want to see is our precious dollars being invested in good-quality services that are equally accessible to all of the people of Ontario. That's why we believe that we need to cap those salaries.

If we don't do it now, we're going to see the same kind of thing next year and the year after that and the year after that. We're going to see these salaries—which right now in the hospital sector are pushing the $1-million mark—far exceed that in very short order. There's an argument. People say, "We have to attract the top executives." Why is it that in the province of Ontario we have to pay Ontario Hydro's CEO over a million bucks, when Quebec Hydro pays their CEO about $420,000? It seems to me that's about the same amount my bill would implement here in the province of Ontario: twice the Premier's salary. This argument that you need those huge salaries to attract the best I don't think is true whatsoever. We see quite successful Quebec Hydro managing with a salary of about $420,000.

That can be accomplished in Ontario only if the government has the guts to do the right thing, which is to put a hard cap. It's not only New Democrats who call for that kind of action. We saw Obama in the US do this with corporations that got public money, and we've seen the same kind of action coming out of the UK. We need to do it here in Ontario. We need to do it now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Charles Sousa: I'd like to share my time with the honourable member from Etobicoke Centre in response to the proposed act, Bill 57, An Act to cap the top public sector salaries.

1350

Bill 57 would require that any public sector employee's salary would not exceed twice that of the Premier, with exception for those salaries already in place and for those negotiated through a collective agreement. Let me provide an excerpt:

"Salary cap

"(2) A public sector employee's annual salary shall not exceed the amount that is twice the Premier's annual salary as described in subsections 3(1) and (2) of the Executive Council Act," with the exceptions—and I say this again—that it does not apply to "a salary established before the day that this act comes into force" or "a salary established under a collective agreement."

Our government has taken leadership on this issue. We have had a salary cap in place for senior public servants since December 2008. We announced in 2008's fall economic statement that the salaries of all senior managers in government making over $150,000 were frozen, and they remain so as of today. The McGuinty government also led by example across all Canadian provinces with salary freezes in place for members of provincial Parliament, first announced in the budget of 2009 and extended for a full three years in the budget of 2010.

The NDP have consistently opposed the government's austerity measures, voting against the MPP pay freeze and voting against it again in 2010's budget. The NDP have a record, also, of ripping up collective agreements when they were in power. They imposed the social contract on provincial employees and they broke collective bargaining agreements, whereas the McGuinty government has vowed to respect those agreements in place and freeze pay, on an ongoing basis, going forward. We've also introduced legislation this past month, the Excellent Care for All Act, a bill which would make sure that hospital senior management teams' pay is linked to health care outcomes.

The NDP governments from other provinces have recognized the need to pay a competitive salary for their senior public servants who are managing government agencies, crown corporations, provincial utilities and others. Folks who disagree with this NDP bill include Roy Romanow, the former Saskatchewan NDP Premier; Lorne Calvert, former Saskatchewan NDP Premier; Gary Doer, former Manitoba NDP Premier; and the current NDP Premier in Manitoba, Greg Selinger. I say this because they've all hired public servants who earn more than twice a Premier's salary. Those NDP governments

know that if you want to have a strong public service with quality public agencies, then senior managers need to be compensated accordingly, often in competition with the private sector.

Public servants do an incredibly important job and work for Ontarians. They run the high-quality programs and services that Ontarians depend on and deserve. I consider the excellent work, for example, of the CEO of Trillium hospital and Credit Valley Hospital as extraordinary.

Mr. Michael Prue: How much does he make?

Mr. Charles Sousa: She—and both of them—do extraordinary work, and they deserve what they get paid. In fact, one of those CEOs was doing double duty by supporting the hospital in Kingston. I can't say enough of how much they've been able to save our community and improve the service and efficiencies within our community. We need to attract good-quality people to do the work.

When government goes to hire—and as I said, we compete with the business community for the best people—we also recognize that we have to save costs, so we've shown leadership by freezing MPPs' salaries. That's because in this House we chose to put our names forward to do our civic duty in representing the people of our constituencies. But for many of us, we do this knowing full well that we may be compensated possibly less than we would in the private sector. After our terms, we can return to the private sector or we can ask our communities to support us again to work here, but public servants didn't make that particular choice. It is their career, and they deserve to be compensated appropriately.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You don't think that they chose that profession as well?

Mr. Charles Sousa: They chose to work on behalf of their careers and their families, just as I and others have chosen to work prior to doing our civic duty.

I appreciate the members for bringing forward the suggestion, but I worry that tying public sector compensation to my compensation or that of the Premier may not be the most effective way to manage costs, because we are here to do something different than those whom we ask to act on behalf of our agencies. They do tremendous work, and if I go out there looking for some good people to do that job elsewhere, they won't choose us if we're going to make limits and prohibit them from doing their job or, for that matter, from being compensated on the results that they can achieve. That's exactly my point: We want them to be compensated for the work they do and for the results they provide.

In our 2010 budget, the Minister of Finance put forward a number of measures that speak to these issues of compensation and reducing our deficit, which I would like to mention quickly and then I'll pass it on to my colleague.

As announced in the Minister of Finance's budget of March 26, 2009, the size of Ontario public service will be reduced by 5%, or 3,400 employees, over a three-year period through attrition and other measures. We will be realistic and flexible in the approach we take to achieve that target, and the quality of service delivered to the public will not be compromised by those changes.

The size of the OPS has fallen considerably since the early 1990s. In March 1992, the OPS had approximately 86,000 full-time employees, but in December 2008 the number was capped at 68,645. By March 2012, that number will be further reduced by 5%.

The staff reductions will be phased in through attrition, through voluntary retirement other forms and other measures, including, for that matter, our tax reforms. Our HST initiative alone was allowing for a number of jobs to be moved from the Ministry of Revenue to the federal public service.

Ontario has the lowest number of public servants per capita compared to other Canadian provinces. The Ontario provincial government has the lowest total current expenditure per capita. Total current expenditures per capita of $7,339 in 2008-09 are lower than that of any other province. Total current expenditures in British Columbia were $8,259; Alberta's were $10,698; and Quebec's, which was mentioned by the honourable member from across the way, were $9,361—all of which were higher than Ontario's.

We are compensating effectively. Our public servants make a valuable contribution to the health and well-being of our province. As I said, unlike the previous NDP government, we're not proposing mandatory days off. We've taken steps to control expenses so we can protect public services. MPPs, non-bargain political and Legislative Assembly staff and those in the House would also be compensated through structures that are frozen. The fiscal plan provides no funding for incremental compensation increases or any future collective agreements.

At this point, I would like to pass it on to my honourable colleague.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): That's fine, but we do go in rotation, so I'll call for further debate in a minute.

Ms. Freedman, one of our table officers, reminds me that if you need copies of the bill, they are available at the table.

Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to speak to the private member's bill this afternoon, Bill 57, which is the Capping Top Public Sector Salaries Act, 2010. If the table has a copy of the bill, I wouldn't mind having it, actually.

This bill has the idea of trying to cap some of the public sector salaries at twice the salary of the Premier. I think the intentions of trying to conserve public sector dollars and putting a limit on some of the very high executive salaries are good, although I do think that the bill is flawed.

If you look at the bill itself—now that I have a copy of it—you note that it doesn't apply to those people who are already making more than the double the Premier's salary, so it would only affect some 113 people for a savings of about $40 million. It doesn't deal with bonuses and stipends, which could be driven further

underground as a consequence of the bill. Really, the logic of twice the Premier's salary, the arbitrary nature of that, just doesn't make a lot of sense.

What is the problem with the public sector salaries? First of all, I'd like to point out that the problem in terms of the budget of Ontario is the difference in public sector versus the private sector. There are some 1.2 million public sector employees in the province of Ontario. We've just gone through quite a significant recession in 2008. Really, the public sector should reflect the ability of the private sector to pay, and that has not happened in recent years in the province of Ontario.

Despite this major recession in 2008, the government has handed out some fairly significant increases in the contracts they've negotiated. When you have the budget of the province of Ontario, they're spending $127 billion this year, and roughly half of it is wages. The government has brought about some restraint measures, but they're quite half-hearted, really. They have a freeze on non-unionized wages, although there are a number of loopholes, I should point out, even in that part of it. They've left loopholes so that they can still increase some of those wages. Based on your length of time in employment in the office or based on an assessment of performance or based on whether you've completed a program, you can still get a pay increase for the non-unionized employees. The immediate freeze is really just a small part of the total wages. Most of them are the unionized wages.

1400

As I've said in the past, this government has a very cozy relationship with some of the unions. Despite the fact that we've been in a big recession, many of the contracts have been 3% a year for four years, which is the biggest part of the budget, the biggest part of the monies being paid out by the province. They're not touching those contracts until they expire. Conveniently, most of them expire after the next election. So the government really hasn't taken on any significant restraint. They've actually created a lot of problems in some organizations with this different approach for union and non-union.

I was on a committee recently for Bill 16, the budget bill, the one day of public hearings we had for that. The Ontario Hospital Association came to that committee and pointed out how they have workers in two different hospitals, some union, some non-union, and how it's really creating inequities for them, within one organization. That's what the government is doing.

The one thing we have also seen, though, with this government is significant increases in the number of people who are making over $100,000 on the sunshine list, particularly this new bureaucracy that the government has created, the local health integration networks. I note that our leader, Tim Hudak, has been raising that issue. On Wednesday, April 14 he was in the Niagara area. The press clipping from the Hamilton Spectator states:

"Ontario Conservative Leader Tim Hudak calls it a 'culture of entitlement' that's crying out for greater restraint ...

"In the last few days, the Niagara West–Glanbrook MPP has turned his guns on the local heath integration networks, pointing out that, according to the sunshine list, some LHIN employees are inappropriately hidden on hospital payrolls while others have received honking salary hikes.

"As a case in point, Hudak singled out Pat Mandy, CEO of the Hamilton LHIN, whose salary in the past three years jumped more than $30,000 to $289,000."

The government has created this new mid-level bureaucracy and, certainly, when I went on the public pre-budget hearings with the finance committee, we heard from groups in Niagara, we heard from groups that were concerned that—in my own riding, in Burk's Falls, when I attended a health care day, there were concerns that this money is going to this mid-level bureaucracy instead of front-line health services.

I know that the North East LHIN just hired a new CEO, Louise Paquette, who used to work for FedNor. There she was paid roughly $160,000; she switches over to the LHIN, no previous health experience, and now makes $260,000, so a $100,000 raise to work for this mid-level bureaucracy. Certainly, the opposition is questioning whether we're getting value for our money from those bureaucracies.

There are people who make significant amounts of money who I am concerned about, but I'm not sure that this bill will necessarily address the concerns I have. For example, the Sick Kids hospital foundation's president was paid $2.7 million. That was, admittedly, as a golden parachute when they were ending a contract, but the annual salary was quite significant as well. I certainly have a problem with that, but this bill wouldn't address that situation.

A hospital foundation is raising money to benefit a hospital. I would have thought that there would be very qualified people, professional executives who are retired, who would do it for free because they want to help out their community or their hospital, or who would do it for a lot less than the salaries we see being paid out. Really, I think it's the responsibility of the foundation board to come up with a financially responsible way of raising money for their hospital.

Another one that certainly caught my eye was the Art Gallery of Ontario. Matthew Teitelbaum made $1,070,000 in total compensation last year to manage the Art Gallery of Ontario. That seems to me to be way out of hand.

Once again, I don't see that this bill would address that kind of situation either. As I mentioned, it would actually only apply to some 113 employees because of that particular loophole that states that the act "does not apply to,

"(a) a salary established before the day that this act comes into force; or

"(b) a salary established under a collective agreement."

I can see the intention of the leader of the third party to try to control some of the high salaries. I just don't think this bill is going to accomplish that, and there are other, more sensible ways of going about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: It's a pleasure to be able to stand and have an opportunity to speak to this particular bill. It's also an opportunity to sort of have a remembering when—I remember when a social contract took place, so I can understand why the unions have been excluded from this bill, because certainly they wouldn't want to repeat the disaster that occurred during the social contract time.

Also, I can understand why there is resistance and reluctance on the behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party because certainly, when we inherited a $6.3-billion deficit, we also inherited a significant number of contracts that indeed we honoured, because we do believe it's not cozy in terms of respecting people; it's actually the right thing to do to respect their contracts, and that we have done. Sometimes it is has been with difficulty and sometimes it's not easy to do, but in fact we have managed to do that through all of this entire process.

It's really important to acknowledge the work that public sector employees do. I've had the pleasure of working with three ministries: energy, transportation and natural resources. I've worked with some of the finest people who do extraordinary work, ensuring the policies, practices, procedures and regulations that successive governments and our government have put in place. They work hard, tirelessly, and they work with extraordinary commitment to public service as a whole.

So, when I looked at this bill, I thought to myself, "Why do I find this illogical?" I find it illogical because when I have a job that needs to be done, I want the very best person I can find. I want that person to bring with them the skills and experience they've accumulated over the years, and to then have successfully put themselves in front of a panel, probably to be accepted for the position, and that I know they bring with them the capacity, the capability and the willingness to do the job. That isn't always the case.

When you have very difficult portfolios or very difficult challenges ahead of you, you must seek out and look for all those skills and capacities within these individuals. I think it's incumbent upon you, and then you sit down, not unlike any union, and you negotiate what that salary will be commensurate with those skills.

Should there be openness, transparency and accountability in the process? Absolutely. There should also be a process for some formative and summative evaluation process, so that in fact the person who's been hired to do the job with these skills is in fact doing the job. There's nothing wrong with those. We've had those in place for many years.

But to suddenly suggest that just the public sector has to bear the brunt of this particular salary cap and not unions, to me, smacks of two-tiered, which is exactly what I think the New Democrats have fought against for years—a two-tiered system. And yet that's exactly what they're proposing to put in place. So I find it illogical.

I don't find a continuity in the process. I think that if you wanted to be able to sit down and look at the broader public service as a whole and how we can make it better, then the best people to bring to the table are those folks themselves. They work and live this every day and certainly, with goodwill, can sit down and help you through that process, if in fact that's your objective. And that's what we did.

1410

If you really wanted to reduce, then you should have voted for the budget. But you didn't vote for the budget. So here you are on the one hand requesting this; on the other hand, you're not prepared to work with the budget.

Mr. Michael Prue: We're on the other side.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I know. There are times when you just vote for a good thing because it's the right thing to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: Every day I come to this House. I don't think I've ever missed a day, or if I did miss, not very many. Every day I watch the Premier rise in his seat. Every day I watch the Premier answer the toughest questions from the other side of the House. Every day I marvel at what he is able to accomplish in talking to the press, the bureaucrats, the other members of this House, his own caucus and his own cabinet. I know, and we all know, that he makes $209,000 a year.

This motion says that no one ought to be paid more than twice as much as the Premier. But, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to put this the other way around and I ask the Liberals to put this the other way around: Is the Premier only worth a quarter of what some of these bureaucrats are? Is this Premier only 25% as good as some of the people that we are paying? Is this Premier only one third as good as some of the hospital bureaucrats? Is this Premier lesser in some way than someone who manages a very small university in Ontario?

Mr. Frank Klees: Yes. Far less.

Mr. Michael Prue: I expect my Tory colleagues to say "yes" on all accounts, but what I'm asking is to the government members: Do you think your Premier is that poor in quality that he should be paid that much less than you're willing to pay all these other bureaucrats? Because that's the way you have answered. That is what you have said today. You have said that your Premier is somehow deficient, that he ought not to be getting that kind of money, that he is somehow only capable of earning a quarter or a third as much as some of these people, that he is somehow substandard.

I want to just point out these people that you think are so much better than your own Premier. You think that James Hankinson, president and chief executive officer, who earns $2,150,000 a year, is 10 times better than your own Premier. You don't want to cap his salary because he's 10 times better and you want to leave it that way. Isn't that what you're saying, member from Etobicoke? Isn't that what you're saying, member from Mississauga, that he's 10 times better than your Premier?

Then you've got this next thing: You've got Thomas Mitchell, president and chief executive officer of Ontario Power Generation, who makes $1,011,000 a year. That

person is five times better and is to be compensated five time more than your own Premier, the person that you follow in here every single day. Tell me how that person is five times better, because maybe he is. If you believe that your Premier is that deficient, stand up and say that.

Then we've got Hydro One. You've got Laura Formusa; she earns $975,000. She's four and a half times better than your Premier in terms of compensation. Is that what you think?

Then we go on to all of these other people: the Art Gallery of Ontario, the University of Waterloo, the University Health Network, St. Joseph's Health Centre, Ontario Power Generation, the Hospital for Sick Children. And on and on and on it goes. All of these people are paid two, three or four times more than your own Premier, who has to stand up every day and answer the questions from all sides of the House, who has to deal with the press, who has to deal with the $107-billion corporation that's the province of Ontario.

How much money is being spent at the Art Gallery of Ontario? How much money is being spent at each and every one of these hospitals? How much money is being spent at Ontario Power Generation? I ask you. The corporation that's being managed out of this chamber is 10, 15 or 20 times the size.

The employees that the Premier of Ontario has to answer to—he has to answer to them; he has to answer to me; he has to answer to you; he has to answer to the Conservatives. Does somebody at OPG have an employee who can stand up and tell him every single day what he's doing wrong? No. Is there anybody in the art gallery who's going to stand up and tell Mr. Teitelbaum what he's doing wrong? Is there anybody who's going to run off to the press and say what is being done wrong? No, but you think these guys should make lots more money.

I don't understand Liberals. I don't understand why you hold your own Premier in such disregard. I don't understand why you think all these people should make more money than him. Maybe some of you will stand up here and answer that. Maybe some of you will explain why a place like the London hospital—we have here Cliff Nordal, head of the London hospital. He makes $732,000 a year. Anybody here from London want to explain why that person is worth $732,000 a year? Why is this person almost four times as good as the Premier of this province?

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes, on a budget which is miniscule in comparison, absolutely miniscule in comparison, and employees who cannot answer back to him.

Why do you think this? Tell me, Liberals. You've still got a minute or two. Come back and tell me why you think your Premier is so deficient. Tell me why he's no good to the point that you only want to pay him a quarter as much. Tell me why each of you is so deficient that you're only going to get paid one eighth as much as them. Are all of you that bad? Are you? You must be. You must think you're totally ineffective and you're not worth your own money, because you think this guy's eight times more important than you are.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That doesn't follow.

Mr. Michael Prue: It follows completely, the Minister of Transportation; it follows completely because this is the argument that has been made by your colleague from Etobicoke and this is the argument that has been made by your member from Mississauga. There's still a minute left. I'd like to hear your argument too. You've still got a minute. Stand up and tell me why you think these guys are so good.

We go back to the whole thing. I also want to deal for a couple of minutes here with the universities. Although they don't make that much in terms of the Premier—they're only paid double or triple what he is—we have a crisis in our universities. We have people, young students, people in their 20s mostly, who are going into university and who are paying the highest fees in all of Canada to attend. They have the worst class sizes. They have the worst ratio of professors to students. Then they turn around and every year this government says, "I think you aren't paying enough. I think that even though we have the highest fees in Canada, you should pay some more."

I think those students need to know that this government thinks that the people who run their universities are many times more important than the Premier of this province, many times more important than the members of cabinet and many times more important than the backbenchers who stand up to defend this policy.

Just a couple of figures here: McMaster University, Peter George, salary and benefits, $536,000—two and a half times or more than what the Premier makes. But that's not the end of it because when he leaves that office, he is guaranteed $1.3 million as his severance pay—$1.3 million. Who do you think is paying that? The government of Ontario is paying that, and the students are paying that in their fees. You all think this is great. You all support this. You all stand up and say that he is worth two and a half times as much as the Premier of the province. More importantly, who is going to pay this? Those students who pay the highest university fees in all the country are going to pay that.

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Then you've got Guelph, which is a nice, small university, lovely place. You have the president, Alastair Summerlee, making $459,000 a year, more than twice what the Premier of the province makes. As a minimum, when Alastair retires he'll get $416,000 in severance pay. Who's going to pay that? The students from Guelph university. You're saying he's worth twice the pay of the Premier of Ontario—more than twice. We're only trying to cap it at twice. All that would happen to poor Alastair if this passed is that his salary would go down from $459,000 to $418,000. That's all that would happen.

Surely, we could take that money and invest it in students. Isn't that what Liberals talk about every single day in this House? Isn't that what you do? That's what you talk about, but it isn't what you do, no.

Then you've got other people: at the University of Toronto, David Naylor, $430,000—we'd only have to reduce his salary a few bucks, not much at all; Waterloo,

David Johnston makes $485,000; York, Mamdouh Shoukri, $498,000 a year. That's where there was a strike last year.

Do you remember the strike last year or the year before that? Remember the strike? Remember all the poor graduate students who were teaching all those classes? Remember how they had to strike for just a couple of bucks? Well, there you've got this guy making that much money, and all the members over there on the Liberal side, all of you think that this guy who forced that strike and put those people out and stopped the classes is worth twice as much as your Premier.

I ask you, start thinking here. I think the Premier's worth $209,000. I think that nobody in this province is worth more than twice that. You'd better start—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Frank Klees: I have been listening with great interest to the debate. I am puzzled by the intent of the bill. I'm puzzled because, first of all, it's leveraging from the level of pay that the Premier is getting. The Premier is the last person in this province that I would want to gauge anyone else's ability against or anyone else's income against. I would simply suggest if perhaps—

Interjection.

Mr. Frank Klees: That's exactly my point, you see. Depending on who is sitting in the Premier's chair, one might think that it's worth leveraging or registering someone else's income or ability against that. Certainly, I can't support this bill for that very reason. It is illogical, in my opinion.

I would much rather that we would have been debating today how we can make the salaries and the income levels of our public service more effective and more geared to productivity and results. I'm one who believes that we still have in this province one of the best civil services anywhere in this country and in the world. We can be very proud of the people who work in the government of Ontario. What we can't be proud of are the policy decisions that often are made by the governments of Ontario, but it is the civil servants who are charged with the responsibility to implement, in the best way possible, whatever those decisions are.

I would like to see some debate around how we can incent our civil service, how we can depoliticize our civil service more, because I'm concerned that often we expect our civil servants to do things that, quite frankly, they find distasteful. We see more and more of that happening today. I won't support this. I believe that there's a better way to get the message out that we want salaries to be commensurate with results and with the work that we're asking people to do.

I just want to close by saying this: I want to thank the civil service in this province for the work that they do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Ms. Horwath has up to two minutes for her response.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to thank the members who have taken the time to speak to my bill: the member for Mississauga South, the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, the member for Etobicoke Centre, the member for Beaches–East York and the member for Newmarket–Aurora.

I have to say that I'm surprised by some of the remarks that were made today, particularly by the government members, because although they claim to want to deal with this issue, they simply are not bringing anything to the table that is going to have any effect whatsoever on the spiralling salaries of our top executives here in the province of Ontario. It's really from them that we're looking for some action, and in fact here today find that they believe that whether you pay somebody a million dollars, a half-million dollars or $2.5 million, it's the amount of money that determines the quality of the person. I disagree with that 100%. When other organizations in this country can get people to work at salaries at a fraction of what we're paying, it's obvious that that whole argument about competitiveness, of attracting those top executives, simply holds no water whatsoever. It's simply a mug's game, and we know who's winning it; it's the people at the top. Meanwhile, we're losing services on the front lines.

Limiting the amount of public money that executives in top positions receive is something that is not only happening here; that dialogue, that debate, is happening around the world. You see it happening in the United States with Obama, and newly elected British Prime Minister David Cameron announced that the salaries of public sector managers in the UK are going to be capped at 20 times the salary of the lowest-paid worker. It's happening everywhere. It's time this government gets its head out of the sand and does something firm and productive in this regard.

I'm open to alternatives. That's why I'm hoping that the people who spoke to this bill and everyone else in this chamber actually votes in favour of it, so we can get it to a committee and talk about what the appropriate measures are. Whether it's the Premier's salary, whether it's 20 times that of the lowest-paid worker, I don't care. Let's get a handle on this and put a hard cap on the salaries of the top executives in this province who are walking away with our tax dollars.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. The time for this ballot item has expired. For those watching in the galleries today and at home, we'll vote on Ms. Horwath's item in about 100 minutes.

ALZHEIMER ADVISORY COUNCIL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 CRÉANT LE CONSEIL CONSULTATIF DE LA MALADIE D'ALZHEIMER

Mrs. Cansfield moved second reading of Bill 52, An Act to establish the Alzheimer Advisory Council and develop a strategy for the research, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia / Projet de loi 52, Loi créant le Conseil consultatif de la maladie d'Alzheimer et élaborant une stratégie de traitement et de prévention de la maladie

d'Alzheimer et d'autres formes de démence et de recherche en la matière.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'd like to begin by offering thanks to my co-sponsors of the bill, Christine Elliott from Whitby–Oshawa and Cheri DiNovo from Parkdale–High Park. I think this demonstrates that in fact this is a non-partisan issue, as Alzheimer's impacts and affects virtually every riding in this province.

I'd also like to take a moment and introduce some guests who have joined us in the gallery today. I have Delia Sinclair, David Harvey, Gale Carey, Philip Caffery, Françoise Hébert, Robert Howe, Dan Andreae, Beth Martin, Rebecca Amyotte and Shane Pratt. The first six or seven are from the Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

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First, I'd like to speak to the bill itself and try to establish what the bill is going to do: primarily, put together an advisory council. What is the purpose of this particular council? The council will raise public awareness and provide for public education. The primary reason for this is to overcome the stigma that's related to Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia and to foster that supportive community; the second is to provide access to the community, respite care and home support services for patients with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia; and third, integration of primary care medical services in community support services for patients with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.

Dementia-specific training: If I've heard anything from the people that I've spoken with, this is something that is absolutely crucial, dementia-specific training to strengthen the skills of patients with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia; accessibility to specialized geriatric and psycho-geriatric services for patients and family caregivers for patients with this disease; interdisciplinary research, acceleration of treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia; and rarely do we speak to the issue of prevention; innovation in assistive technology and housing, workplace policies and income supports for informal caregivers of patients and other matters as requested by the minister.

It's important to acknowledge that the composition will be made up of informal caregivers of patients with Alzheimer's, persons with the disease and other forms of dementia, and persons from various cultural backgrounds. This is a critical issue as we try to pull in the community, all of the communities, the diversity in this province, that Alzheimer's isn't related to one particular ethnic group; it is something that impacts and affects all of society. So those are the reasons. Then we thought, "Well, we need to have some time," so we put two years around this so that we could look to the other jurisdictions; we could see what was happening in other parts of the province.

Someone is going to ask, "Well, why now? What's the specific reason that you picked on Alzheimer's and related dementia?" Hopkins and Hopkins, back in 2005, said there will be a 35% or 36% increase in dementia over the next decade. We're halfway through that decade. That's a significant number of people. In fact, it translates to one in three baby boomers will end up with Alzheimer's or a related dementia disease—one in three. Our population is growing, and although Alzheimer's is not specifically related to just the aging process, because you can in fact have this disease in your forties, certainly dementia is related to aging; and our population is aging. We're doing a really good job fixing the hips, the knees, caring for diseases; the body is in pretty good shape. It's now time to concentrate on the mind. We need to know what impacts Alzheimer's to begin with. What is it that starts this disease and the progression of this disease? That's the whole issue around research, critical research, ongoing research—because remember, people with Alzheimer's and related dementia can live 20 years, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter. So this isn't a disease that goes away quickly: It stays within the family, within society, for a long period of time.

We also need to look at the numbers. In Canada it's estimated, I think it was in 2008, at about 500,000 people; that's 181,000 in Ontario, in 2008, and we're now in 2010. As I indicated, that number will continue to grow, but as it grows, it's not just the individuals we know of who are diagnosed with the disease, it's the ones we don't know about and the challenges that they're facing. That's why it's so important to pull in the different cultural groups.

But interestingly, as well, regarding the impacts of that disease as they go through it—I remember as Minister of Transportation—driving and dementia is a very significant challenge. I'm sure the current Minister of Transportation is struggling with that. We need research on how to deal with that impact as more and more of those individuals are on our highways and on our local roads. I would suspect the insurance companies are very interested in what the outcomes of that kind of research will be. Maybe that's the kind of partnership we'll be able to put together. So you can look at this disease from a whole host of perspectives.

The economic cost is estimated at $770 million a year, or $7.7 billion over that 10-year span. And that's just the beginning, because by 2030 the population will probably be up close to 30%. Think of the economic impact if we do nothing on how we develop this.

Now, we did put together $1.1 billion or $1.2 billion on an aging at home strategy. But it also speaks to why we need this bill, because that strategy may not, in some cases, include how to deal with Alzheimer-related dementia in aging at home; they're dealing more with the high-risk patients coming out of hospitals and trying to keep them in their homes for longer periods of time.

That then takes you to what happens in our long-term-care homes. The greatest number of people in those long-term-care homes are in fact Alzheimer patients or related dementia disease patients. The greatest cost in community services is people with Alzheimer's or related

dementia diseases. That's not going away. That's going to continue to grow, and I'm suggesting that if we do nothing—in fact, when Carol Taylor said at the public forum that we have a tsunami, this is it. We must plan ahead for the challenges that are going to be facing us in terms of actual economic costs: that burden, if you like, on our health care, which is now 46 cents of every dollar. It's an enormous cost.

But we also need to look at the cost to our families, to caregivers and to society as a whole, and what we're planning to do to make a difference. We put together a website, alzheimerstakingaction.ca. I sent out a few thousand letters just to my constituency, because I have such a significant number of people who are getting older, as my grey hair will attest. I asked them to tell me their stories of what they were doing to try to live with this disease in their families. Well, touching of course; without question. Striking challenges: You wonder how people can be torn between fathers, mothers, children, working and 24-7 care, and then you look at that related health care cost on them.

I can think of a specific situation where an individual is at home providing 24-7 care for someone with Alzheimer's. She has gone from someone who enjoyed golf and tennis and very vivacious living to someone who now has diabetes, heart problems and significant stress. That places that other burden on our health care system. Add to that the terrible stress of struggling with someone as they are leaving you with this disease—and that's exactly what they're doing. You need to help them in a psychological way, to provide for that respite care, to provide for the counselling as they deal with this very difficult progressive disease.

They say there are over 100 forms of dementia and some half-dozen primary forms. I can't imagine what it's like for people who have lived with someone for 50 years or 60 years to find a way to now care for that person—they're aging themselves—and realize that one day that person will wake up and say, "Who are you? Where am I? What are we doing?" and then becomes incontinent, can't feed themselves and maybe has co-morbidity issues such as Parkinson's, cancer or others.

It's not something we can ignore. It's something we in fact must deal with. We must look at prevention. We must see what it is we can do to help delay the onset of this disease. We must encourage people to get active and get out there. I remember when we used to have adult programs throughout this province, where you could take anything from bridge to knitting to upholstery, or take another degree if you liked. That changed, but that socialization and using those grey cells is absolutely critical—physical exercise; using Minister Best in terms of her health and wellness promotion for seniors; encouraging more people to get out, to do, to get active, to get involved.

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Then we need to look at what we can do in terms of encouraging exercise. We actually took exercise out of our curriculum for many years, right? We're starting to put it back in. Older people need exercise as well, but how do we encourage that exercise? You can exercise in a wheelchair; you don't have to run on a treadmill. There are so many things that we can do by working together. So the idea is that the council sits down and they bring the experts, the people who are living with it, the people who are caring for it, the doctors, the nurses, the long-term care, whoever it takes.

The Alzheimer Society put together the 10 points and those 10 points are the basis on which we can move forward if in fact we work together to do this, and just maybe we can stop this tsunami from actually overtaking us; just maybe by working together and providing for the prevention, the research, looking at the disease, looking at the people who are impacted, both as individuals and as caregivers, we can truly make a difference. The time to do it is now because it is the right thing to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Certainly I'm going to be supporting this bill to enact the Alzheimer Advisory Council Act, 2010. I want to congratulate my three colleagues who have brought this initiative forward.

I believe it's extremely important that we establish an Alzheimer Advisory Council for the purpose of considering matters related to informal caregivers and patients with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, and then being in a position that they can make recommendations to the minister, because the minister ultimately is responsible for developing and implementing a strategy respecting research, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Of course, the minister would be required to take into consideration the reports of the Alzheimer Advisory Council and the Ontario Health Quality Council to contribute to the development and implementation of the strategy.

The act states the government of Ontario's undertaking to address issues related to Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

This has been an issue that has certainly been of tremendous concern to past governments. I just want to acknowledge at this time that it was back in September 1999 when I, as Minister of Health, and also Minister Johns, who was responsible for seniors, identified this as a significant issue in response to concerns that had been brought forward, and we jointly announced at that time Ontario's Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias: Preparing for Our Future.

That was a very multi-faceted and comprehensive strategy. In fact, in 1999, it was unprecedented anywhere in Canada, but thanks to the stakeholders in this province who had brought this issue to our attention, the government did move forward. Some of the action items were: to become involved in staff education and training; physician training; increasing public awareness, information and education; planning for appropriate, safe and secure environments; respite services for caregivers; research on caregiver needs; advance directives on care choices; psychogeriatric consulting resources; and intergenerational volunteer initiatives.

Again, it did include an advisory committee which advised the Ontario government on the implementation of the strategy. We were focused on taking a look at the prevention and the treatment of Alzheimer's and other dementias.

However, today, we are at a different place. The Alzheimer Society has come out with a report, Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society. It is very alarming to see how the rate of Alzheimer's is going to increase over the next 30 years. We take a look at the health and the economic burden of dementia: My colleague has spoken to that. Also, we need to make sure, in light of those statistics, where we see that the prevalence of Alzheimer's and related dementias in Canada will increase from 2008, when we had 480,600 people with dementia, to 2038, when we're going to have 1,125,200 people with dementia—again, the hours of informal care during that time period will increase from 231 million hours to 756 million. Of course, the economic consequences are enormous, because the economic burden of dementia doubles every decade, increasing from $15 billion in 2008 to a startling $153 billion in 2038.

We have to take action. We have to develop a strategy. We need to turn the tide, and we need to intervene. We know that in other countries they are trying to do exactly that. I applaud my colleagues who have brought forward this initiative, which establishes the Alzheimer Advisory Council.

It's extremely important that we again take a look at the informal caregivers and the impact that this disease has on those individuals, and that we also consult with those who have a lot of familiarity with the disease. I know that in my own community, certainly, we have the institute there, and I think we're really quite excited about some of the research that has been undertaken. We really need to try to improve the quality of life for patients and also for their caregivers. It takes a huge toll on those individuals who have Alzheimer's and who suffer from dementia.

I'm certainly pleased that this council is being considered here. I would hope all members of this House would lend their support, because there is so much more to do.

I think all of us know family members who probably have had Alzheimer's or who are in the first stages of Alzheimer's, and certainly they need support. We need to educate the public and we certainly need to raise the awareness.

I applaud my colleagues. Let's make sure we move forward without haste.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I thought somebody else would be speaking before me, but certainly I'm pleased to rise today to stand here and declare my open support for Bill 52, and I hope it receives the support of all members of the House.

It's great to see a bill like this that is co-sponsored; it's good to see the members trying to work together. It's great to see that the member from Whitby–Oshawa has co-sponsored it along with the member from Parkdale–High Park. I think it's a bill that deserves the support of all members of this House.

Over the last year or so, I've had the privilege of chairing the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. It's an all-party committee. We've heard from people all over the province of Ontario. We travelled around to some of the communities that some of us would not ordinarily get to. We've talked to people. We've engaged the Ontario public in a discussion on mental health and addictions. We've heard some incredible stories about the challenges that are faced by people who are either suffering from a mental health condition or have a family member who is suffering from a mental health condition.

Now, in those travels we've also heard from the Alzheimer Society very, very strongly about what they're finding. They're finding that it's one of the most common forms of dementia in seniors and that 66% of those who will experience some form of dementia will indeed experience Alzheimer's.

It's a timely bill that the member from Etobicoke Centre brings forward. According to the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, more than 180,000 Ontarians are dealing with dementia on a daily basis. They expect that number to double in less than 25 years. This is going to be a huge challenge, and that's why I think this bill is so timely, in that it sets up the advisory council that can perhaps come forward with a strategy that would allow the Ontario government to deal with this in a way that it should be dealt with.

I think the efforts like the one being brought forward today to establish the advisory council would also help in the research, the treatment, and perhaps the prevention—the education we can do with people in the province of Ontario.

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I'll tell you what we said in our interim report from the select committee. We said that "according to presenters, a co-ordinated, integrated response will enable service capacity to keep pace with growing numbers of persons with dementia and their caregivers and" may "assist them through the continuum of their condition."

What we heard as we travelled around the province of Ontario about mental health treatments that are available, services that are available, is that Ontario has a very fractured system. People often don't know where they should turn to next, don't know where that help is available from. Presenters who came before us said that "additional specialized geriatric services, training for staff, assessment, diagnosis and early intervention, and consideration of the effects on the acute, community and long-term care systems" should "be part of the response."

We know already that early diagnosis and treatment can lead to very, very positive health outcomes. I think the goal of the bill we have before us complements what we heard from experts at the committee.

I'm pleased to support the bill. I congratulate the member from Etobicoke Centre for bringing it forward. It deserves the support of all members of the House.

People in Ontario now are beginning to speak out on an issue that has been held behind the doors, I think, a little bit too long. People want to talk about mental health. They want to talk about Alzheimer's. They want to talk about dementias. They want something done about it. I think, if we work together, all three parties in this House, just today will be a very small step but a very important step to making sure that we treat this with the seriousness that it deserves.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am very happy to have an opportunity to speak to this bill regarding the establishment of an Alzheimer Advisory Council, and I too would like to thank the members from the Alzheimer Society for joining us today for this debate and for all their hard work in producing the report, which was really the impetus for this bill in the first place. So thank you very much.

As a fellow committee member, under the leadership of the member from Oakville on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, I can certainly echo his report to us today about the many concerns that we've heard expressed by family members, caregivers, the society and other organizations about the real need to develop an Alzheimer's strategy for Ontario. So when the member from Etobicoke Centre approached me about co-sponsoring this bill, I had no hesitation in saying yes, and I would like to thank her for her leadership in bringing this really important matter forward. I did listen carefully to her speech. It's obviously a great passion for you, and you're very dedicated to it. So I'm really honoured to be a co-sponsor of this bill with you, along with the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Just to start with, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo did mention that in 1999 under the Progressive Conservative government, Minister Witmer, as she then was, and Minister Johns jointly announced Ontario's Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias: Preparing for Our Future. The Ontario government invested $68.4 million in this comprehensive multi-faceted strategy over five years, ending in 2004.

This Alzheimer strategy was the first of its kind in Canada at that time, but since then, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Newfoundland have taken on formal plans to address this important issue, following Ontario's lead. It's now time, as the member from Etobicoke Centre said, to renew this commitment and move it forward to the next stage.

The proposed legislation follows recommendations identified in the 10 by 20 plan for dementia released earlier this year by the Alzheimer Society of Ontario. The plan itself, since my colleague has already outlined the specifics of the bill, focuses on five key areas, and I'd like to speak about that just very briefly at this point.

The first area the plan focuses on is prevention, earlier diagnosis, and intervention. This is incredibly important in any health care issue, and I would say particularly so in this area. Thanks to innovative research here in Ontario and abroad, new evidence suggests that it may be possible to delay and even prevent the onset of Alzheimer disease.

There's some research that has indicated some pretty staggering statistics that I'd just like to share with this House. One is that smoking after age 65 can increase one's chances of developing Alzheimer's by 79%—that's huge; obesity in midlife makes a person three and a half times more likely to experience Alzheimer's; diabetes makes one twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's; genetics accounts for only 25% of Alzheimer's cases; and chronic stress can quadruple your risk of developing the disease. Some of these findings show there are some things we can do in a preventive sense, perhaps to prevent the onset but also to maybe delay some of the symptoms and make life a little easier for people who are diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

But it's not just the physical steps we can take by not smoking, controlling diabetes and so on; I think there is some research being done that suggests there are some brain exercises you can do that can really help delay the onset of it. I had the occasion yesterday to speak to some people who are leading the way in terms of music therapy, and how learning to play the piano, listening to music programs—all of those—can spur and stimulate certain parts of the brain that may help prevent Alzheimer's from becoming as severe as it otherwise might. I think there's some really promising work being done by a variety of organizations that will be announced within the near future. We need to move forward on all these fronts in terms of prevention.

The next focus of the plan is creating accessible caregiver supports. The society has already identified the importance of increased access to community support, respite and home care services for sufferers. I think this is particularly acute, and I would say that probably every member of this House has heard some of the really tragic stories about caregivers who are dealing with a family member who has Alzheimer's, who are dealing with the stress of that diagnosis, of maybe not having their loved one know who they are, and not getting the kind of positive feedback that other caregivers might be getting when they're helping someone in a stressful situation like that. They become physically burnt out themselves and in some cases may even pass away before the family member who has Alzheimer's.

We really need to support this group of people for the wonderful work they are doing, and make sure they and their family members have access to home care supports that will allow them to live in their own homes, where the outcomes will no doubt be much better. Some of the suggestions that have been made to introduce flexible work hours and supports for caregivers are welcome. Many people are caught in the sandwich generation, caring for parents as well as for children. We need to make sure we relieve them of some of the stress and offer them whatever help and incentives we can for them to continue doing their good work.

The Canadian Caregivers Association notes that 20%—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Sorry, the honourable member's time has expired. I hate having to do that.

Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I'd like to preface my comments with two things. First of all, I'm in total, complete and utter support of this bill, and I want everyone to understand that no matter what I might say from this point on, I am in support of this bill. The second thing is that I want to talk about and pay homage to a woman who is very dear to me, and that is my mother-in-law, who is now deceased.

She was born in Hong Kong in 1919. Her name was Norma Blake. She lived in that place for the first 17 years of her life until her father, understanding that the war was coming, took his family away from Hong Kong to make sure they were safe. She had to pick up roots and move from Hong Kong to the United Kingdom. She was a young woman there during the Second World War. She volunteered in the Red Cross; she volunteered in all the public service events that a young woman could volunteer in during times of war. At the conclusion of the war, she felt it was her patriotic duty to go off to Germany, and worked there in the control commission on behalf of the British government, trying to restructure Germany so that the German people and the German government could get their country back intact.

She was there for a number of years. She met my father-in-law, Jack Curson, there. They were married and had their first child, who was born in Germany. She returned to England with Jack in the late 1940s or early 1950s, set up shop and developed a brand new life in Glasgow, Scotland. They came as a family from Glasgow to Canada. She worked incredibly hard and built a life for herself and her family. She worked for CHUM radio in those heydays of CHUM radio in the 1950s and 1960s, with the huge—I don't know—enormous impact that that radio station had on the people of Toronto. I say all of that by way of the fact that she was an incredible woman.

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When my father-in-law died a number of years ago, my wife and I started to notice that something wasn't right. It wasn't just the fact that she had lost her husband; something wasn't right. We tried as best we could, over a number of years, to maintain her in her own house. We brought in Community Care East York, who looked after her. We brought in Meals on Wheels, who brought meals to her. But she became increasingly unable to focus, until the point came that we had to take her to Ina Grafton Gage Home in East York. They looked after her for the balance of her life.

We found out, when things started to go wrong, that she had Alzheimer's. We found out that this vibrant woman, who had lived in Hong Kong, who had lived in Britain, who had lived in Germany, who had supported governments, who had worked for governments, who had raised a family, who had held down a responsible job with CHUM, who had done all of these things, suddenly was incapable of looking after herself.

In those days at Ina Grafton Gage, I would often go to visit her—almost every Sunday. I would go to visit her there, and not only did I talk with her but I talked with all of the other residents. They were all women, because Ina Grafton Gage was for women only. I would talk to them. Most of the residents there had some form of dementia—mostly Alzheimer's, but other forms of dementia as well. It was sad, I have to tell you, absolutely sad to see this vibrant, exciting and smart woman descend down that road, over a number of years, with the horrible effects of Alzheimer's.

I watched her as she at first knew everything that was going on, or seemingly had good days, and then some bad ones. In the end, she thought I was somebody else. She thought I was her first boyfriend. She started speaking to me in Cantonese, because that's the language of her youth, and when I couldn't understand what she was asking me—she called me Frank then, because she thought I was Frank, and tried to teach me Cantonese so that we could re-establish.

She died, and I remember feeling so incredibly sad because in the end, at the time of her death, she did not know any of us; she did not know who we were.

I say that by means of why I support this motion: to pay homage to her, but also to understand that what happened to her can literally happen to anyone. It can happen to me; it can happen to you. It can happen to anyone, and we need to do something about it.

I am supporting this bill because, if it is passed, it will establish an Alzheimer Advisory Council. If it is passed, the chair and members of the council will be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to represent the caregivers, the people with disease, and people with various cultural backgrounds, so that we can all work together. If it is passed, the council will give a report to the ministry each year, while the Ontario Health Quality Council, formed in 2004, will give a yearly report card to the minister as well. If it is passed, the minister is then bound to take both reports into consideration in planning to combat Alzheimer's, and dementia in general. And finally, if it is passed, the Alzheimer Advisory Council will be charged by the bill with supporting interdisciplinary research; advising the government on public education and awareness to overcome the stigma of dementia; fostering supportive communities; facilitating early diagnosis; and encouraging lifestyles that promote healthy brains.

I do this in remembrance of that vibrant woman, but I also do it in the full knowledge of the homes that I, as an MPP—and I'm sure all MPPs share this: We all go into these homes. We all see these people. We all need to understand that they were once vibrant, exciting, smart and capable people, who sit there, oftentimes, not even knowing their names. We need to find out how to combat that. We need, as a society, to make sure that some day, some scientist, some doctor, some learned person, someone who can study this, can make sure that we put an end to it. That is ultimately the goal, because science has made it possible for all of us to live longer lives.

When I was a boy, I remember in my classroom that they would show us that we would probably have a life expectancy of 68 years of age. I remember looking at the statistics. When Bismarck brought in the first old age pension, it was set at 65 because hardly anyone would reach 65. When we brought in our pensions in Canada, the average payment for an old age pension was 13 months, from 65 until 66 and one month. That was the average length of a pension.

Science and medicine have made enormous strides in making sure that people live now into their 80s and 90s. Unfortunately, one of the consequences is that Alzheimer's is taking its toll. The next goal, in my view, isn't to make us live longer; it's to make us live better. If we can accomplish that there is no dementia and no Alzheimer's, then to live to 80 or 90 will not be a fear for some people. If you can live well with all your wits about you until you're 80 or 90, that will surely be the scientific breakthrough of my lifetime. So I support this; I support this with all my heart.

I want to ask the government members, because I'm a boomer—I was born in 1948. I'm on the leading edge of those guys who are getting to be 65, which is going to happen in a couple of years, and I know that unless we do something, there are going to be a lot more people with Alzheimer's. It might even be me. It's going to be people I know; it's going to be people who are sitting around in this room. I think that we need to start looking at that problem today. I am saying this not as a criticism of this bill but as a wake-up call to this government and to this Legislature. We need to take Alzheimer's seriously. We need a caregivers' strategy. It needs to have doctors and nurses who are dedicated to this today. As the boomers work their way through, we know that there is a tsunami coming. We know that there are going to be tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of people who turn 65 or 70 or 80 in the next 10 to 15 years. We all know that. We know it's going to happen, and we need to be ready for it.

We cannot afford to be cutting expenses in hospitals. We cannot afford to cut nurses. We cannot afford to cut drug research. We cannot afford to vote down the recommendations made by the Alzheimer Society before the committee hearings on Bill 21, the Retirement Homes Act. We need to take all of those to heart. We need to have requirements for training on dementia and care of individuals with dementia in all of our retirement homes. In general, the government needs to allow seniors with Alzheimer's dementia to live in settings which are entirely appropriate.

I am asking the members across this House: Please, please vote for this bill. But in so doing, please understand that you have another obligation: an obligation of government, an obligation of budgets, an obligation to help those people who are of our age and who will surely find themselves in this place unless and until such time as we find a cure. We need to find that, we need to do it, we need to put the money there and we need to put the full force of this Legislature behind that initiative—

1510

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Mario Sergio: I want to join all members of the House in support of Bill 52. I want to commend and congratulate the member from Etobicoke Centre and the other two members of the two other parties. I think it's a very noble gesture to see this wonderful co-operation in the House, especially on a particular piece of legislation as this. As well, I want to welcome the members of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

The intent of the bill is to create, if you will, a strategy. The aim of the bill is to prevent dementia and increase the level and quality of care for Ontarians with this disease—disability—their families, as well, and manage at the same time the health care cost.

I've heard the various members speak on the issue. I don't want to repeat them, but let me say that this is one of those diseases that doesn't see or have barriers when it comes to colour, religion or ethnic background. When we say 65 and over—no longer. We see people in their 40s and 50s affected by this disease.

A couple of weeks ago, I was at a meeting in my constituency and we were speaking about diabetes. I have one of the highest diabetes percentages in the province of Ontario, given the socio-economic factors in my area. Then, the Alzheimer's debate came on. The people were really wondering as to why we didn't have a comprehensive, coordinated strategy when it came to Alzheimer's; I think we should.

I think it was the member from Kitchener–Waterloo who said several years ago—I believe in 1999, the government at that time took the leadership role to create a strategy. Unfortunately, since that time, the numbers have increased, we've been falling behind and there is no cure for most types of Alzheimer's. When we hurt, we hurt, and it's sometimes serious, sometimes not so serious, but we feel we are hurting. Imagine people who are affected with this particular disease. For years they have to live the rest of their lives—and not only them. It's their family members as well who have to take the toll.

I have four nursing homes in my area and I go there from time to time. I think we can all sense what it feels like when you sit down in front of one of the people affected with Alzheimer's, especially in an advanced stage. You look into their eyes and they look back at you and you are wondering if they know who you are, if they know your name. You're trying to speak to them and they look at you and there is no response. This is the type of sickness that robs them of their minds, their brain. They can't articulate any more, they can't feed themselves, they can't act on their own. Eventually, they pass away. They lead the rest of their lives until they are gone.

I think today we have an opportunity to do something about it. I hope that all members of the House will support the bill that is in front of us and move on in doing some wonderful things. It's about time that we do something about Alzheimer's disease.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I too want to add a word of appreciation to the three sponsors of this bill: the member from Etobicoke Centre and the members from Whitby–Ajax and of course Parkdale–High Park.

It's an important issue, and it's interesting that it's these kinds of issues that so often bring us together as a focus because we all want to do what's right, and this is the right thing to do.

The member from Beaches–East York talked about paying homage to an incredible woman he knew. I want to pay homage to an incredible woman I knew, my late mother. This is very personal for me. She suffered from Alzheimer's. It's a tragic illness, and she left us far too early. So, I know from some painful experience what this disease can do to patients and also to families.

That having been said, there's a lot of hope out there too. There are a lot of good things happening. We don't want to just curse the darkness and, in so doing, add a deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. We want to light some candles of hope. We want to pull together those resources and all the good people there. I think this bill does that.

As a type 2 diabetic myself, I also know that I and hundreds of thousands of others need to be monitoring this very closely. Ms. Elliott spoke about diabetics having twice the risk. It's certainly that. While I hope to live a good, long time and not have my kids worry about going through with me what we had to go through with my mom, I'm prudent enough and have been around long enough to know that we're not here to fear the future, we're here to shape it, right? And if we want to shape it, we need to act. That's the difference between a great idea and an implementable great idea. So there is a lot to be hopeful about.

Just this last weekend, communities across Ontario held the annual Alzheimer's Walk for Memories. I was once again privileged to be part of this. There was some $1.7 million raised in support of local programs for patients and families of those dealing with Alzheimer's. It's an amazing commitment from the volunteers every year, and this is just one of several things they do.

We have an opportunity today, as members of this House, to understand the need to pool research, treatment and what we know about the care of dementia patients and simply take it to the next level and move forward with it, right? I certainly support that. I don't think that anybody in this House who's had even an inkling of experience with this illness wants to go through that or wants anybody to go through it.

So, we'll move forward. The comprehensive advisory council will help us do that. As we prepare our medical system to adjust, we'll remind ourselves of Abraham Lincoln's admonition: "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." Let's do something special. Let's give some years back to people.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. I would just remind honourable members to please not have their BlackBerrys near the microphones. When they vibrate, it drives the interpreters crazy, because they've got earphones on.

The honourable member Mrs. Cansfield has up to two minutes for her response.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I would like to say thank you, first of all, to my co-sponsors, the members from Whitby–Oshawa and Parkdale–High Park, for their generosity in sharing this bill with me. Also, to Kitchener–Waterloo, Beaches–East York, Oakville, York West and Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, thank you for your heartfelt comments on this.

The member from Ancaster–Dundas is correct. One of the things governments get to do is provide hope to people. It's part of our responsibility. We get to identify the challenge and provide the hope. But we're not doing this from scratch. We've been blessed to be able to work with some pretty phenomenal people: David Harvey from the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, and Françoise Hébert, whom I just think the world of and who has been an absolute joy and a dear friend. They are the people, along with all those other chapters, who take that very tiny amount of money, go out into the community and make a difference in people's lives today.

But the challenge is, it isn't enough. It isn't dealing with research and prevention. Actually, it's dealing with the sheer numbers and the tsunami that in fact is coming. That's our responsibility; that's the hope that we can give them by building on the work that they are already doing.

1520

I thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart for the support that you've given me, for the phone calls and the comments that you've made. In particular, to all of those volunteers, those patients and caregivers, bless you for the work that you do in ensuring that people you are caring for are getting the very best they can get in the circumstances. Again, thank you to the Alzheimer Society and all the boards of directors and the people who every day—every day—work hard and very tirelessly on behalf of these folks.

Now, you know what? It's our turn to do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time for that ballot item has expired. We'll vote on Mrs. Cansfield's item in about 50 minutes.

BREAST CANCER SCREENING ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉPISTAGE DU CANCER DU SEIN

Mr. Orazietti moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening / Projet de loi 56, Loi visant à accroître l'accès aux services de dépistage du cancer du sein.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. David Orazietti: I am pleased to speak to this bill, Bill 56. As members of the House are aware, this bill was introduced prior to the House proroguing. This bill has been reintroduced and passed first reading, as you know. At the time of second reading debate, all parties supported this bill. I want to thank members from all sides of the House for their support in the past on that. I hope that today all members of the House will again support this bill because of what it is designed to do.

I want to take a few minutes to talk a little bit about why we need to do this in Ontario, what the benefits are, some of the organizations that support the bill and some of the individuals who have been very instrumental in helping to lead a discussion around increasing access to breast cancer screening in the province of Ontario.

I want to take just a moment to introduce a couple of folks who are in the members' gallery to my right. Dr. Martin Yaffe is a senior scientist of imaging research at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and a professor of medical biophysics and medical imaging at the University of Toronto. Dr. Yaffe is seated in the members' gallery, as well as Natalie Gierman, who is the manager of health promotion and policy and advocacy for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation; and Beth Easton, who is the vice-president of health policy at the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, the Ontario division. I want to thank the folks who are here in the members' gallery as well. There are a number of other individuals, and I will be referencing them momentarily.

But I think it is so very important that we get this right. I have to say that I think we often believe that we have the policies and the practices in the province on this issue right. It's adequate, and we think we are doing a good job, and we're comfortable with where things stand today in the province of Ontario. But I think if we spend a little bit of time to take a look at the research, to examine the evidence and to examine what is being done in other jurisdictions, we will find that Ontario is behind when it comes to access to breast cancer screening.

The bill, if it's passed, would allow women in the province of Ontario who are between the ages of 40 and 49 to enter the Ontario breast screening program. The OBSP, which is a program that is delivered through Cancer Care Ontario, is a fantastic program. I don't think anybody in this House and, frankly, in the medical community and the health sector is not proud of the Ontario breast screening program. It's a great program.

The point is that women who are 40 to 49 in the province of Ontario cannot get in that program. They do not have access to the OBSP. If the bill is passed, this would allow a woman in the province of Ontario who has a referral from her primary health care provider, her physician or her nurse practitioner to enter the Ontario breast screening program. We know that the Ontario breast screening program has sites where they have high-quality mammograms, digital mammography; accredited sites with the Canadian Association of Radiologists. There are well-developed quality assurances at these sites. The physical exams are done by individuals who are specially trained in this area. The results of the screening and the appointment are provided within several weeks to both the patient and the physician. There is help to set up additional tests or referrals, if that is what's needed, and a reminder letter is sent for indication as to when it's time to return for a further follow-up.

This organized program is very important to women in the province of Ontario, and presently there is a large group of women who do not have access to it. Some 20% of all breast cancer in this province is being presented in women who are under the age of 50.

Just today, in fact, there was an article that appeared in a paper in British Columbia—and British Columbia is one of the jurisdictions in this country that allows women into an organized breast screening program at the age of 40. The individual who is referenced in the story is 41. Her name's Kim Tempest, and she said she was eligible for an annual mammogram paid for by the government in British Columbia. She felt healthy, felt like there wasn't a need for it and avoided going in. It says here in the article that that well-intended decision cost her: Three months later, she needed far more invasive treatment and surgery because she had breast cancer, and it would have been less invasive treatment and procedures that were required had it been detected earlier. She says, according to the article here, that she regularly spreads the word about early detection and healthy living. That has obviously had an impact in her life and can have an impact on the lives of so many other people.

The reference is around British Columbia having the lowest cancer rates in the country. Now, there are obviously a number of factors for that, but with respect to this individual I think it's important to note that the organized breast screening program that's present in the province of British Columbia, according to their information, has indicated a 25% reduction in mortality rate as a result of that program.

The point of this legislation is a fairly simple and fairly straightforward one. Women in the province of Ontario today are having mammograms done with the referral from their primary health care provider. It's, I suppose, a bit of an ad hoc process. OHIP pays the cost; the province pays the cost. This is being done today. But these mammographies are not done in an organized breast screening program. The technology and the ability to have better detection is improving. Film mammographies, compared to digital mammographies, are not as thorough, and MRIs are being used more intensively. We have better equipment today to be able to detect breast cancer in women who are pre-menopause, as opposed to post-menopause. We know with earlier detection that in women who are younger the cancer is often more aggressive. It's harder to detect. In women who are a bit older it is easier to detect and sometimes less aggressive. It is still very important to remember that we are developing the technology and it does exist today, through the Ontario breast screening program, to include women in our province 40 to 49.

I want to take just a second and reference a few of the comments that were made with respect to the proposed

bill. Susan Whelan, who is a former MP and a former Canadian Cancer Society CEO of the Ontario division, said, "This bill will allow more women who want to be proactive about their own health to have access to the highest-quality mammogram and screening available in the province." She also said, "Last August, at the age of 46, my own diagnosis of stage 3 breast cancer came as a shock as I had been having regular mammograms. However, I didn't know that there were better-quality mammograms available through the OBSP. I am convinced this bill would have provided me with access to better screening and an earlier diagnosis."

1530

Earlier diagnosis saves lives and saves the challenge, the difficulty and the struggle of having to deal with breast cancer at a later stage. As far as the cost—because I know there will be those who will say, "What about what it costs to do this?"—the Cancer Care Ontario 2009 report said that the cost of mammographies delivered through OHIP as opposed to through OBSP is a $17 difference. That's what the difference is; it's $17. We are paying for this through OHIP right now, today, and the difference is $17 for women who are already receiving mammographies, who would still require the physician's or nurse practitioner's referral. When you look at the examples in this province of later detection and the cost of that on a per-case basis, for example, not to mention the loss of life, you're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars to begin with in terms of that treatment.

Dr. Yaffe said, "There is excellent scientific evidence that high-quality mammography screening can help prevent these deaths and improve the quality of life for these women and their families; therefore I urge the Minister of Health to waste no time in implementing this initiative."

Sandra Palmaro, the CEO of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, said, "Since 2007, the foundation's position has been that women aged 40 to 49 should be allowed access to screening mammography in the Ontario breast screening program to ensure that they benefit from the highest standard of care."

I've introduced this bill for a number of reasons, but because I think it's to do the right thing. My aunt was diagnosed with breast cancer when she was 28 and she died when she was 40. This is a disease that is affecting women earlier and earlier. We have the ability now to save lives. We know that many other jurisdictions out there allow women into organized breast screening programs. In fact, in Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, the Northwest Territories, PEI, other international jurisdictions and European countries, organized breast screening programs starting at the age of 40 are the benchmark for this type of screening. We are behind in the province of Ontario, and this needs to change.

Again, I want to thank those tremendous advocates who are here today in the members' gallery to support this, for the work that they do on a regular basis, fighting this disease and raising awareness about this disease because it is so, so very important for many people in the province.

I want to thank members opposite, who, as the bill was introduced previously, spoke in favour of it. I hope you'll do that today. I want to thank you for the support then and I trust you'll be supporting it today.

I want to thank people in my community who have been supportive of this bill.

This needs to change in the province of Ontario. It is time that women who are aged 40 to 49 are allowed entrance into the Ontario breast screening program.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to join in the debate on Bill 56, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening. I certainly would like to commend the member from Sault Ste. Marie for reintroducing this legislation and for his continued commitment and persistence on this most important topic. I can assure you that I am very pleased to support his bill once again.

I'm sure that every person in this chamber has had some instance where breast cancer has affected them personally, either through a loved one having breast cancer or a colleague or a co-worker. We all know the physical and emotional impacts of breast cancer.

As the member from Sault Ste. Marie indicated, the legislation, if passed, will allow women from ages 40 to 49 to have access to the breast cancer screening programs with a referral from a physician or nurse practitioner.

Just a few things to note about this: First of all, breast cancer diagnoses are not as common for this demographic as for the age group currently eligible to access screening. The number of diagnoses within this age group is still statistically significant. Even though studies do report that there are certain risks associated with breast screening, including exposure to radiation and false positive diagnoses resulting in sometimes unnecessary treatment and stress and other psychological repercussions, it is certainly to be minimized if they are accompanied by the appropriate referral and certainly don't mitigate against the need to have this breast cancer screening process available for women in this age group.

A paper written on compiled associated research in 2007 indicated that while less helpful than for those in the 50-to-69 age group, screening mammograms for women 40 to 49 years of age showed a decreased incidence of breast cancer deaths. In fact, seven out of eight published studies on breast cancer mortality in this age group indicate some degree of benefit via reduced mortality from breast screening. This averages out to about a 15% difference, which is significant.

The paper also indicates that the screening should be individualized and should include an assessment of the woman's risk for breast cancer, a discussion regarding the benefits and risks of screening, and a discussion of her concerns about breast cancer or risks associated with screening mammography. The review concludes that the authors support women in this age group participating in

screening as long as they are fully informed, which currently happens. It also recommends that if a woman decides to defer screening mammography, the decision should be revisited every one to two years. So it's obviously a process of constant vigilance to make sure that screening is done as appropriate.

We're not talking about every person being involved in this breast cancer screening process. We're talking about women who are at high risk participating in screening under the advice of a physician or a nurse practitioner. I think that it has a real impact on people's ability and quality of life to be sure that they are screened as early as possible. As the member from Sault Ste. Marie indicated, the earlier diagnoses are often types of cancer that are more aggressive than breast cancer that maybe an older woman might experience, so all the more reason that we should be screening at an earlier age.

Breast cancer in younger women is more difficult to diagnose currently. Much of the discussion surrounding this issue relates to women under 40, but it's still applicable here because as a woman ages, the breast tissue becomes less dense. In women who are younger, dense breast tissue can often be a barrier to finding a lump during a breast self-exam. So the benefits of screening and mammography are all the more important here because it's far more difficult to detect lumps that are cancerous in women who have dense breast tissue.

By 40, the data suggests that there is some benefit, as mentioned earlier, to mammography screening, but too often, by the time a younger woman finds a lump in her breast, the cancer has advanced and is therefore harder to treat. Anything we can do to save more women from the ravages of advanced breast cancer we should certainly do. That is why I am supporting this bill.

I would like to just comment on the program at Sunnybrook, the breast screening program that I am familiar with. It is excellent. It offers excellent care, excellent diagnosis, excellent treatment. I'm very grateful to Dr. Yaffe for being here today to offer his support for the bill that is being presented by the member from Sault Ste. Marie.

Also, I had occasion to participate in the walk to end breast cancer in its first year, along with a group of people, to support my best friend, whose sister passed away early from breast cancer. I can only tell you how incredibly moving it was at the end of the walk, when all the women came in. The women who were just participating in the walk were given blue T-shirts and the women who were currently battling breast cancer or breast cancer survivors were given pink T-shirts. It was incredible, the number of women in that group who were then surrounded by their children when they came forward at the end of the line. That, to me, was incredibly moving, the number of young women who are being diagnosed. So anything that we can do to detect it before it becomes life-threatening, that we can make sure that they are able to receive less invasive procedures, absolutely we should be doing.

I really can't say enough how much I appreciate the member from Sault Ste. Marie for bringing this forward again. It's going to make a real difference in the lives of many women in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a privilege to rise today on this private member's bill. I'd like to thank Mr. Orazietti for bringing it forward.

1540

As David Letterman would say, "This is déjà vu all over again." I can remember back on September 17 of last year that here in this House, this exact bill was brought forward for debate, word for word, except the bill in September was numbered Bill 200 and this one is numbered Bill 56.

Bill 200 passed second reading on September 17 of last year. It didn't just pass, it didn't even need to go to a vote, because no one was voting against it. The bill is eminently sensible. It saves people from personal tragedy and it reduces the cost of health care. It is a bill that deserves to be implemented. Thus, all parties in this House unanimously supported it then, as I expect will happen today. My colleague France Gélinas, our health critic, spoke in support of the bill. Bill 200 enjoyed support from the speakers from the Conservative and Liberal parties.

All members in this Legislature voted and spoke in favour of this bill, but that didn't seem to matter, because the government left it to languish in committee. It didn't go anywhere. It went into purgatory. The McGuinty government didn't see fit to put it on the agenda of the committee, so it languished there for the remainder of September 2009, then right through October, November and then December. Bill 200 celebrated New Year's still sitting there, languishing in committee, waiting for its day to be called forward. The bill spent the cold days of January and February stalled, in a state of suspended animation, until that fateful day in March, when the Premier pulled the plug on this bill. He took the lead from Mr. Harper and said he was going to prorogue the House, and Bill 200, along with numerous other private members' bills, died on the order paper, died with a simple stroke of the pen.

So we're here today to debate this bill once again. We have our allotted time to speak to it, and I'm happy, frankly, to rise today to lend my support to the bill. Along with the rest of the NDP caucus, I'm going to be supporting it and I expect that it will pass. But the question then becomes, what then? What will happen to this bill? Will it in fact be implemented? Are we going to see this bill languish yet again in committee? What's the point if all the members of all the parties vote in favour of a bill and then the Premier's office decides the bill isn't worthy of appearing before committee?

This is a good bill. This bill will ensure that women, as has been mentioned, between the ages of 40 to 49 can be referred to the breast cancer screening program run by Cancer Care Ontario. Women 40 to 49 will need a referral from their physician or nurse practitioner in order to access the program free of charge.

Bill 56 is important because we know that with higher screening rates, breast cancer mortality decreases. As has been mentioned, breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis in women in Ontario. It makes up 27% of cancer diagnoses. It has the second-highest mortality rate, next to lung cancer. So it's important that women, on the advice of their primary caregiver, can gain access to the program.

We also know that increased screening leads to earlier detection, which allows for a greater variety of treatments and decreases mortality. Between 1989 and 2004, breast cancer mortality rates in Ontario women aged 50 to 69 decreased by 33% due to improved cancer treatments, but also due to increased participation in breast screening. So the simple reality is that Mr. Orazietti's bill follows in the path that has been set before of preventive action that reduces human misery, reduces health care costs and makes this province better for everyone.

There's clearly an important role for high-quality, well-organized breast cancer screening programs; therefore, this bill is, without a doubt, a step in the right direction.

For this program to work, these women need to be referred by a physician or a nurse practitioner. But what happens to as many as 500,000 women who don't have access to primary care? That is a very serious problem. Without ensuring that every woman has access to primary care, how many women will be missed? This is a good program, but if you don't have access to it, it will not save lives and reduce health care costs as it can and should be doing.

We need to address the crisis in primary care. As I've said, I'll be supporting this bill, and my New Democrat colleagues will support this bill. It's extremely important to ensure that we make breast screening available to more women to detect breast cancers earlier. I want to quickly touch on prevention here. We spend $42 billion per year on our health care system to treat people who are sick. We spend very little on keeping people healthy, which will prevent some illnesses and save precious health care dollars. That makes no sense.

We know that leading healthy lifestyles lowers the chance of people developing all sorts of cancers, including breast cancer—lifestyle issues such as a healthy diet, regular exercise, the elimination of smoking and maintaining a healthy weight. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We need a strong and vibrant Ministry of Health Promotion to keep costs down in terms of money and in terms of the human cost of suffering from illness.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, but this new screening initiative is a step in the right direction. I wish the member for Sault Ste. Marie well on the journey of seeing this bill become law. I truly hope that this bill gets called before committee and comes back to this House to be debated and voted on at third reading.

My guess is that the majority of people who sit in this Legislature have had a personal experience of being in a hospital ward while a friend or a family member dies from cancer. I would be surprised if there were many people here who had not had that experience. It's not an experience that any of us want to have on any sort of regular basis. So when we have an opportunity to actually reduce the number of people who go through that particular process and course of treatment, who are forced to address that fate, then I believe that this Legislature and this government should take action to ensure that this bill actually comes to fruition.

I'd like to say to the government today that this backbencher has brought forward a bill that makes sense. This private member is speaking to something that shouldn't just be debated as a private member's bill, although I'm very pleased that the member has taken the initiative to bring it forward. This is an initiative that should be taken on by the government, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Health Promotion and made a part of government policy, because for all of the people in this province—men and women together, children of mothers, mothers of young women, all those who can be touched personally by this—action to reduce the number of people who are diagnosed late with breast cancer is something that will be a lasting gift to them and to all of us in this province and in this House.

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It was a shame that this bill simply died before in committee. It's a good thing that it has been brought forward again. My hope is that this time, rather than simply going through second reading and being sent off to committee and joining a long list of private members' bills that essentially get to sit or are parked in orbit around the Legislature, this one goes forward to committee, to hearings and is adopted as government policy and fully implemented. That would be a fitting tribute, an act of respect on the part of this Legislature and this government, to the men and women of this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's certainly a pleasure to rise in the House in support of Bill 56, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening. As so many people have said, we commend the member for being persistent and bringing this bill back to the House again as a private member's bill.

I'm particularly pleased about the aspect of this bill that wishes to have women 40 to 49 screened through the auspices of the Ontario breast screening program. It is a program that, as a physician and former medical officer of health, I remember early on, when it was first proposed that Ontario look toward a province-wide screening program. In fact, I was visited by physicians from Sunnybrook, coming up to York region explaining the concept to me and asking for our help at the York region health department to promote the screening of women, particularly between the of ages of 50 and 69.

The reasons, of course, were clear. Breast cancer is a very common cancer in women. In fact, in the next year it is estimated that some 8,700 Ontario women will develop breast cancer and approximately 2,100 women

will die from breast cancer. We know that older women are more at risk, as has been stated. Some 80% of cases are in women over the age of 50, leaving 20% under the age of 50. But the vast majority of those would in fact be in the ages of 40 and 49.

We've also heard that the earlier breast cancer is detected, the greater the chance to lower mortality from the disease. Between 1989 and 2004 in Ontario, breast cancer mortality has decreased by some 33%. Now, we know that improved treatment regimens and so on are reasons this has occurred, but the organized breast screening program is also very much part of that very encouraging statistic.

Now, some of the reasoning behind why women between the ages of 40 and 49 have not been included in the breast screening program and are not necessarily recommended for regular mammography has been that perhaps there are too many false positives; that some people may have a suspicious lesion and may have to have more biopsies and various interventions; and that there is anxiety generated with the testing and, perhaps, with these false positives. This has always struck me as a particularly paternalistic view of the way women are going to react.

As the member from Sault Ste. Marie has stated, women now can, of course, obtain a screening mammography at younger ages than 50. They do so through OHIP on the recommendation of a physician. What we are doing here is simply expanding that opportunity for women to be referred by a physician or nurse practitioner to an organized program.

The organized program has many benefits. Obviously it's a very comprehensive screening program where a visit will include a mammogram, instruction in breast self-examination and, in some locations, a physical breast exam by a specially trained nurse. The sites and the machinery used are all accredited by the Canadian Association of Radiologists, and there's a quality assurance program at each site.

I'm really pleased that since those early days of the breast screening program we now have some 140 sites across the province. There's also a mobile van service that services the north. Some 30 more northern communities are serviced in this way from Thunder Bay.

An organized program allows us to have a registry of women. We can follow the statistics. Even though the scientific evidence to lowering mortality in women 40 to 49 through an organized screening program can be somewhat controversial—certainly I have looked at many of the different studies; some seem to show an improvement in mortality, some don't—by including these women in an organized screening program, such as the one we have here in Ontario, we will be able to follow these women; we will be able to know statistically whether there are benefits. This is why I am particularly in favour of this particular move to including these women in this program.

The goal of the current breast screening program is to try and increase participation rates for women to some 70% of the eligible group. I think not only is the member from Sault Ste. Marie's proposal to expand this program something very valuable that we can talk about in this House, but also, it gives some of us an opportunity to urge all women 50 and over, in fact, to obtain a screening program through the Ontario breast screening program.

So I commend the member. I know that certainly those of us on the government side will be urging the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to look at this particular initiative should it pass today, a lot, with great seriousness, with a view to including it in the ministry's programs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm certainly pleased to support the bill that has been put forward by the member from Sault Ste. Marie. I had supported the bill last time. I do hope that this time we have an opportunity to get it through committee, and that we can bring it back into the House and we can move it on and we can make sure that as a result of this initiative, all women over the age of 40 to age 49, who are currently not provided with free access to breast screening services, will be covered.

This bill, I think, is extremely important. I think for most women this is certainly a disease that they do dread, and I think that whatever we can do in order to make sure that we identify those who do have breast cancer as early as possible, we need to take those steps. This bill would mean that there would be, as I said, free breast screening services available to all women between the age of 40 to 49 years old as a result of a referral that they would obtain from their physician or a specified nurse. The screening services would be provided through the Ontario breast screening program or that program's successor.

This is an issue that has touched each one of us in one way or another. We all know either of a family member or a friend or a neighbour who has suffered from breast cancer. Some have very successfully fought the disease for many, many years. Others, sadly, have lost the battle. I can remember an aunt that I had who battled breast cancer for years and years, and I really admired her tenacity, I admired her optimism. Eventually she did lose the fight.

It is a very common type of cancer faced by women in this province. We know that each year, there are going to be 22,000 women who are going to be diagnosed with breast cancer. Unfortunately, it still kills about 5,000 Canadian women. This is more than any other type of cancer except for lung cancer. In our province, it's estimated that next year 8,000 women will develop breast cancer, and approximately 2,100 will die. To put this into perspective, one in nine will be diagnosed, and one in 27 will die of breast cancer in their lifetime. So it is important.

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This bill is important because one of the most significant preventive initiatives that we can undertake is the breast screening. Screening can find cancer in its early

stages, and like any other cancer, that's when you have the best opportunity to treat the cancer successfully. That means it's going to be less likely to spread. That's going to leave more treatment options available, and, ultimately, we are going to be able to save precious lives.

A lot has been done to increase access to breast screening in this province. Currently, the OBSP already provides high-quality mammography services for all women in the province who are 50 years of age or older. Those screenings are free. The results, I can tell you, are provided very quickly. Follow-up is arranged and yearly reminders are given to the participants. Our government certainly was very strongly committed to this program when we were in office: We invested $24.3 million to set up an additional 88 screening sites across the province. As well, women across the province have access to stand-alone OHIP funding clinics. I can tell you that the success of the program that we already have in place has been quite obvious, in that mortality rates in Ontario for women aged 50 to 69 did decrease by 35%, due in large part to increased participation in breast screening.

However, we need to not only make it available for women 50 to 69, we need to make it available for women between 40 to 49. But we need to make sure that we raise the awareness, because even though it's free, there are still many people who don't access the breast screening programs that are available. We need to encourage their participation.

Cancer Care Ontario has established a target to have 70% of women aged 50 to 69 participate in regular screening by this year and 90% by 2020. As you can see, based on the fact that only 66% of women aged 50 to 69 are now participating, we have a long way to go to reach the target.

So I applaud the initiative of the member from Sault Ste. Marie. I trust this bill, which will increase access, will be passed by the Legislature and, again, we can see a positive impact for women.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: I'm more than pleased to join colleagues from all sides of the House today in supporting David Orazietti's excellent bill. It is, for me, the first opportunity I've had to speak to a private member's bill, so my maiden voyage is certainly well spent on an excellent, excellent bill.

I joined David Orazietti and his excellent guests this morning, just to listen quietly in the corner at the press conference downstairs, and I had the opportunity to chat again with Susan Whelan; Mr. Orazietti has mentioned that. She was just 46 last year when she was diagnosed, and I think she is adding a great deal to join this effort to see that this bill goes through. Susan and I shared the federal world together—Belinda Stronach as well, another person in her forties who was a victim of breast cancer—and you get a whole sense of the collegiality and of the people in your life. That has been mentioned by many of the speakers today. There are none of us who have not been touched—our friends, our families—by this horrific disease.

While I will have to be redundant, I think many of the points that have been made are worth saying again. The bill, of course, proposes that we admit women between the ages of 40 to 49 to the Ontario breast screening program, but as has been pointed out by the author of the bill, these are women who will have been referred by a physician or a nurse practitioner. So the argument that the current system is going to be overwhelmed by thousands of new applicants for mammograms is certainly not sustainable.

I think the point has been made as well that the cost here of having a woman included in the OBSP in that age category will be a cost of $17 per woman; in other words, their mammograms that had been done outside of the OBSP are indeed now covered by OHIP, just the same as those who are participants over 50 are as well covered by OHIP. So it's not going to be an overwhelming cost.

If I might address that, I would say that we are in deficit. I am a member of a government that is working hard to eliminate the deficit, but even in deficit times choices are made. Choices are made by the government, choices are made by the Ministry of Finance, choices are made by the Ministry of Health, and the choice to lower the age of women to 40 who can then receive a mammogram through the OBSP is an imperative choice that the government and both ministries I think must make.

I would just say that in preparing today to speak in support of my colleague's bill, I was taken really aback to learn—and again, this has been mentioned—that here in Canada the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories, PEI, Nova Scotia and the Yukon have already been including women over the age of 40 in similar programs. I am stunned, as someone who originally hails from the east, to think that the great province of Ontario has yet to follow all of those other provinces and other jurisdictions such as Japan, Austria, Australia and Greece in allowing this kind of program to be in place. I would just say that I hope that that is going to change. I hope Ontario will indeed join other provinces and other countries in their wisdom.

After Mr. Orazietti spoke to me last week, like all of us going at the pace we go in this job—not just we are busy; everybody's busy today—I got home to Barrie and there's a ton of mail all piled up from the week. As I went through the mail, as coincidence would have it, there was my notice from RVH that it was time for my mammogram. That's what triggers it for me. That's what makes me realize it's time again. I don't, rightly or wrongly, think, "Oh, it is time." It's getting that trigger performed elsewhere, and that's a trigger that women in Ontario between 40 and 49 with the referral have to receive as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Further debate?

Seeing none, the honourable member Mr. Orazietti has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. David Orazietti: I want to thank the members in the House today who spoke in favour of Bill 56. The member from Whitby–Oshawa; the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, a former Minister of Health; our doctor and colleague the member from Oak Ridges–Markham; the member from Barrie; and the member from Toronto–Danforth: Thank you all very much for the opportunity today to support this bill.

I hope that all members of the House will support this bill and it's something that we can get on with. It is time in the province of Ontario to allow women between the ages of 40 and 49 into the Ontario breast screening program. It's a tremendous program. It's a thorough program delivered by Cancer Care Ontario. I think everyone knows that this is the best way to have screening done in the province.

When you're 40 to 49, you need a doctor's referral to go for mammography. When you're 50, you don't need a referral. You can walk into the best screening program in the province. Something doesn't make sense. When you're 49, you should be able to get into this program as well, and the additional criteria is having that referral.

I think it's time that a change is made in this province that puts Ontario on a more level footing with access to health care screening in the area of breast cancer screening like other jurisdictions in this country. Other provinces in this country allow women 40 to 49 into an organized program. European jurisdictions and other jurisdictions in the world allow this to take place because they know it's the right thing to do.

This is the right thing to do for Ontarians, especially for women in the province of Ontario, and quite frankly, there is no cost argument on this. This will save the health care system money and it will save lives. I want to encourage all members to support Bill 56 because I think they should be eligible to be in the Ontario breast screening program.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has now expired.

CAPPING TOP PUBLIC SECTOR SALARIES ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT DES HAUTS TRAITEMENTS DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will first deal with ballot item number 22, standing in the name of Ms. Horwath.

Ms. Horwath has moved second reading of Bill 57, An Act to cap the top public sector salaries. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will call in the members after we deal with the next two ballot items.

ALZHEIMER ADVISORY COUNCIL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 CRÉANT LE CONSEIL CONSULTATIF DE LA MALADIE D'ALZHEIMER

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 23.

Mrs. Cansfield has moved second reading of Bill 52, An Act to establish the Alzheimer Advisory Council and develop a strategy for the research, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mrs. Cansfield?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I would refer the bill to the justice committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed to refer the bill to the justice committee? So ordered.

BREAST CANCER SCREENING ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉPISTAGE DU CANCER DU SEIN

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 24.

Mr. Orazietti has moved second reading of Bill 56, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Orazietti?

Mr. David Orazietti: I'd ask that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The bill will be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. So ordered.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1612 to 1617.

CAPPING TOP PUBLIC SECTOR SALARIES ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT DES HAUTS TRAITEMENTS DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Ms. Horwath has moved second reading of Bill 57. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Miller, Paul
Gélinas, France	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Balkissoon, Bas	Hardeman, Ernie	Rinaldi, Lou
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Ruprecht, Tony
Brown, Michael A.	Klees, Frank	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kular, Kuldip	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	McMeekin, Ted	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Miller, Norm	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Moridi, Reza	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dickson, Joe	Murray, Glen R.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Elliott, Christine	Pendergast, Leeanna	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Phillips, Gerry	
Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 9; the nays are 31.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All matters pertaining to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some nos.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, May 31, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1620.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters
Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margarett R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
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Lundi 31 mai 2010



Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 31 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 31 mai 2010

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for personal thought and inner reflection.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: I'm delighted to welcome to the Legislature today paramedics from throughout Ontario but especially the representatives who are here from Simcoe county, including Kenneth Priestman.

Mr. John Yakabuski: On behalf of my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, Mr. Hillier, I'd like to introduce Robin Hawe, councillor for the town of Smiths Falls, and his wife, Anne, who have joined us here in the members' gallery today.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On behalf of our wonderful page, Tristen Groves, we have his mother here, Victoria Lavine-Groves. We welcome her to the gallery.

Mr. Dave Levac: Today is the first annual Brant Day. There are over 75 people from my riding who have come down to the reception to share with my fellow members that Brant has lots to offer. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park today.

We also have, as the lead for this, the former member for Brant, Ron Eddy, mayor of Brant, along with a plethora of visitors who are with us: Lesley Lovett-Doust, the president of Nipissing University; Paul Armstrong, Neil McMahon and Lauren Olson from Mohawk College; Councillor Marguerite Ceschi-Smith and Councillor Greg Martin from the city of Brantford; Kevin Klein, Leslie Cooper and President Max Blouw from Laurier; and representatives from TCO. Let's just say we've got the best of Brant in the gallery today. Welcome, and I thank our members for being here.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I have a number of guests here today. I'd first of all like to welcome a new parliamentary press gallery intern, Nidhi Sandillya. She is here today. Please welcome her. Her father is also a chef in our parliamentary dining room, so it's really nice that she has come full circle here today. I want to welcome her.

I'd also like to welcome some guests who are in the west gallery: Cyndee Todgham Cherniak from Lang Michener is here with her mother, Lynn Todgham.

I also have Grant Wright of Wright Sales Tax Recovery; Jim Garchinski from the Police Pensioners Association of Ontario; and Al Olsen, the president of the Police Retirees of Ontario. Please welcome them.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to welcome Kevin Leung. He's another intern here today; he's working in my office.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further introductions?

I too, on behalf of the House, would like to welcome Ron Eddy back, who was a member from the 35th Parliament representing Brant–Haldimand. It's great to have you back today, Ron.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the first secretary of the embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Eljan Habibzade. Please join me in welcoming our guests today. Welcome.

On behalf of the member for Thornhill and myself as Speaker, I'd like to welcome to the Speaker's gallery today the grade 7 and 8 students from Henderson Avenue Public School and my friend and one of their teachers, Malcolm Crawford. We welcome them to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'm sorry; I'm a little late on the welcomes. But I wanted to welcome the president of Nipissing University, one of the finest post-secondary institutions in the province. Dr. Lesley Lovett-Doust is here today with us, and we welcome her. She's part of Brant Day, because we have a campus in Brantford.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Acting Premier: As you know, Dalton McGuinty is going to force Ontario families to celebrate Canada Day with a massive new HST hike on everything. Families will also remember, as they're paying Dalton McGuinty's new greedy tax grab, that back in 2003 Dalton McGuinty was so eager to convince people he was not another tax-and-spend Liberal that he staged a photo op where he signed a promise not to raise taxes on families without their explicit consent, but then he increased taxes across the board anyway, including his massive health tax hike. I ask you, Acting Premier, why did Dalton McGuinty tell families something that he definitely is not?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: This government has made strategic investments in health care and education and was re-elected in 2007 on the basis of those kinds of undertakings. Unlike the member opposite, we don't think the

status quo is good enough. We are taking a tax change that will not raise taxes but overall will reduce taxes for some 93% of Ontarians. That's why Jack Mintz, that leader's expert witness at last year's budget hearings, says it's absolutely the best thing we could have done. That leader and his party supported it. That leader and his federal counterparts, Mr. Flaherty, Mr. Baird, Mr. Clement—all of them support this. They recognize, as that member used to recognize, that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Quite frankly, Minister, the only thing Dalton McGuinty has been strategic about is more inventive ways to take money out of the pockets of Ontario families and seniors. Let's look at some of the examples since Dalton McGuinty famously broke his promise to Ontario voters. He helped David Miller raise taxes for property taxes, vehicle registrations, property transfers, garbage collection and even plastic bags at the grocery store. Then Dalton McGuinty himself increased personal, corporate and small business taxes across the province; seniors' property taxes; taxes and fees for eye exams, visits to the chiropractor or physiotherapist; and even fees for students and on their athletic and extended health plan fees.

Minister, wasn't it just a shameless use of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Acting Premier?

1040

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The electorate of Ontario cast their judgement in 2007 on that issue.

What I will say is this: It is complete fiction, what the member has just said. This year, as of January 1, Ontario has the lowest tax rate in the country for the first $37,000 of income, which he voted against. We will have the lowest marginal effective tax rate on new businesses in North America; that member and his party voted against it. We created then doubled the seniors' property tax credit; that member and his party voted against it.

That member's expert said that our policy will create 600,000 net new jobs in the next 10 years. That's what it's about: a brighter future for our children and our grandchildren.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: During the 2007 campaign the minister talks about, Dalton McGuinty was asked if he was going to increase taxes. Dalton McGuinty said no, the critics—"They're wrong, they're wrong, they're wrong." But Ontario families knew better than to believe Dalton McGuinty when it came to his plan on taxes, and they were right.

Let's see what he's raised since the 2007 election: taxes on hydro, desktop and laptop computers, printers, television sets, BlackBerrys, iPods, digital cameras, telephones, DVD players, tires, commercial vehicle operator registrations, camping, destination marketing fees and more—now, Canada Day, your greedy HST tax grab.

Minister, isn't enough enough? Which of these items will you lower taxes on and actually give Ontario families a break?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Acting Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: That question is pure fiction. Let me tell the member opposite, 93% of Ontarians are getting a tax cut this year. He and his caucus voted against it.

Why isn't he so passionate about the cost of generic drugs? They're against that and for big pharmacy. Why did they vote against the seniors' property tax credit?

Premier McGuinty has set in place a policy that will create jobs, will create investment and will create a better future for our children. That member and his party want to go back to the days of Mike Harris, when you fire nurses, when you don't train enough doctors, when you undermine our schools and close hospitals. That is the wrong direction. This government, with the support of his federal cousins, is moving forward on an aggressive tax package to make our economy more competitive and better for—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Simcoe North.

New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Acting Premier: Let me tell you, Ontario PCs stand against his cuts to front-line pharmacy care, as we stand against his increases, his excessive greedy tax grabs.

On Canada Day, Dalton McGuinty is bringing his HST tax grab on everything. Dalton McGuinty is adding taxes to haircuts; cable bills; Internet bills; magazine subscriptions; vitamins; dry cleaning; ice rentals; ballet lessons; karate, judo and boxing classes; hockey school; and memberships to the YMCA, Curves and fitness clubs.

Minister, I've got to ask you, isn't this extraordinarily greedy, even for Dalton McGuinty's standards? When will you stand up and lower taxes on items so Ontario families can make things meet in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In his typical—and I wish to respect you, Mr. Speaker; I don't want to be unparliamentary—disingenuous fashion, he has neglected to tell everybody—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No; just withdraw the comment, please.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I withdraw that. I'm trying to find a word. In a typical less-than-clear way, the Leader of the Opposition has refused to acknowledge the largest tax cut in the history of this province to individuals and corporations. He failed—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order.

Acting Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: —failed to acknowledge the—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Simcoe North, you were doing really well. I just started to sit down, and you started.

Acting Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: —failed to acknowledge the largest sales tax credit in Canada. He failed to acknowledge a range of other tax credits—which he voted against—that will help seniors, help the lowest and most modest.

Now we hear it unequivocally: They're for Big Pharma. They're for higher generic drug prices. They're for paying more. They're for making sure seniors pay the highest generic drug prices in Canada.

Our plan is the right plan for jobs, for growth, for our children and our grandchildren. It's the right plan for Ontario's future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Dalton McGuinty's attack on the pocketbooks of Ontario families has no end. On Canada Day, Ontario families will face higher taxes to fix a leaky faucet or a bathtub, to improve electrical wiring, to repair a broken furnace or water heater, or help with snow removal, lawn care, gardening or house painting. Now we see the government contemplating taxes on water bills and a second stage of the health tax.

How big is your appetite? How far does Dalton McGuinty's greed grow? What in the world aren't you going to tax since you're taxing everything under the sun beginning July 1 in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, 83% of what the typical Ontario consumer spends will not be affected by our changes. The member opposite insists on neglecting the other side of the story. I look at his colleagues sitting next to him—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Acting Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Let me read to him what a fellow named John Tory had to say. He said about our tax policy, "It was a courageous and the right thing to do. It's being done right in Ontario as we speak, and it is, in many respects, a right thing to do for investment and job creation." That's John Tory. His federal counterparts have made this all possible because they recognize that, overall, it's a tax cut for Ontario families and businesses.

The people of Ontario will see through that argument. They recognize that this change is the right change for jobs, investment and higher family incomes. That's why we're pursuing it: for a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I still can't believe the finance minister is spinning this tale that his HST tax grab is a tax cut for Ontario families. Even your Premier was finally forced to admit that it's a tax grab—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. You can be spun some place as well, too.

Please continue.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The minister in Wonderland says it's a tax cut to put the HST on air travel, on train tickets, on boat and bus trips and on the gas they will use to get to their destination. When they get there, Dalton McGuinty is waiting with the tax machine as they arrive—agricultural fairs, Shaw and Stratford Festivals, comedy clubs, plays, galleries, summer music festivals and increased taxes on accommodations when they want to lay their head down at night.

Minister, what will Dalton McGuinty do to help people in Niagara, Prince Edward county, Stratford and the communities around Algonquin park when people can't travel this summer because of your greedy HST tax grab that will take money out of their pockets?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: That's why we created the tax cuts and tax credits for all Ontarians. That means 93% of us will pay less in—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Leeds–Grenville will withdraw the comment that he just made.

Mr. Steve Clark: I withdraw.

1050

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Let me read on about something his former leader John Tory said: "I think [Hudak] has not acknowledged something that pretty well everybody else has. A lot of people call and say it is going to help with productivity and job creation and investment and the cost of capital. So I felt dishonest if I came out and said I was ... against it because that benefit is significant."

John Tory has the courage of his convictions. John Tory has said what he would do. That member and his party and that caucus will not say what they'll do with the HST.

We're moving forward. It's right for jobs, it's right for investment, it's right for income. I only wish that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order, Minister, member from Hamilton East, member from Sarnia. It's the last week, and I've tried very hard not to name anyone, but you're pushing me. I can start with some ministers too.

New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. There are only 31 days before the McGuinty government's HST kicks in. Ontarians are bracing themselves for the new unfair tax. They've been writing to me by the thousands, because they're very, very worried.

Lori Summerhays writes this: "My husband and I both work and have two children, seven and three.... Our

family will be forced to find an extra $100 to pay for taxes each" and every "month. Please try to understand how difficult it is for the average family right now to just try and make ends meet."

Does the Acting Premier understand the plight of the Summerhays family, or is he simply out of touch?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I respect the points of view and concerns that are raised by people, but let me read a few other comments to the leader of the third party that others have made with respect to our HST policy: "Ontario's economy will grow by 3.5% this year and ... 3.7%" next year, leading all Canadian provinces. This is the Conference Board of Canada, an independent expert group. Households "will benefit from income tax cuts and from temporary sales tax transition benefits as the province moves to harmonize the provincial sales tax system with the federal goods and services tax ... in July 2010."

What that means is that all the independent observers—the Chamber of Commerce, anti-poverty groups like the Centre for Policy Alternatives and even Hugh Mackenzie—have said this is the right policy. We're pursuing it. It will create—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, perhaps the Acting Premier needs to know that families are united against the HST, because on average they'll be paying about $800 more each and every year. More than a quarter of a million people have signed the NDP's petition to stop the tax, people like John Parent from Windsor, who writes, "I'm a 65-year-old pensioner on fixed income.... I figure the HST will cost me $805 a year.... I am now considering doing a lot of shopping" across the border "in Michigan." And Fiona Alford of Hamilton says, "I am a mom who works full time, married with a teenager and a seven-year-old. I just ... found that we will be paying out an additional $955 per year!"

What does the Acting Premier have to say to Ontarians like Mr. Parent and Ms. Alford?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would say, don't take the NDP numbers as what they say they are. They are false.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Hamilton East, please come to order.

Mr. Paul Miller: Dalton admitted it was right.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just called you to order. We can just let the clock run. We could get through four question periods this week.

Acting Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The NDP numbers are simply inaccurate. They've been torqued to make it look like people are spending more than they will, which is typical of the NDP.

What I would ask Ontarians to do is look at what the Conference Board of Canada has said, look at what Hugh Mackenzie has said and look at what the Centre for Policy Alternatives has said. What was the title of their paper? Not a Tax Grab After All.

The leader of the third party can attempt to torque numbers and try to tap in to angst and fear. The fact is that New Democrats across the aisle asked us to raise the provincial sales tax 1%. We said no. We created a new system that will improve jobs—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: One would think that the finance minister of this province would have more respect for the people whose numbers I'm using—not NDP numbers, but the families of this province who sent us their numbers. Opposition to the McGuinty government's HST reaches every single corner of this province, from families to small business owners. Barrie gym owner Lynda Keffer writes, "Adding this tax will surely impact members who can barely afford the $44.95 per month—it adds the equivalent of an additional month" of fees "per year" for people.

Cliff Heaney says this: "What this tax is going to do is really hurt my business of selling steel roofs. The HST will add another $1,143 to the price. This is going to seriously hurt my sales."

Small business owners know that the HST is going to force them to cut jobs as their revenues fall. Why doesn't this government get it?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have a great deal of respect for the people of Ontario, and that's why we are moving forward to create jobs and lower prices in investment for all Ontarians. The leader of the third party again ignores the tax cuts, the input tax credits. It is a complex piece, and folks who want to move forward understand—folks like the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, people like the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, people like the Conference Board of Canada. It's about 600,000 net new jobs; it is about an 8.8% rise in income; it is about $46 billion in net new investment in the next 10 years; it's about a brighter future for our children and our grandchildren. I rely on those organizations, those bodies, much more than I do on the leader of the NDP, who wanted us to raise—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Acting Premier. This morning I was at Toronto city hall for the start of Bike Month. Cyclists want to see this province take active transportation much, much more seriously. Instead, what do they see? They see the McGuinty government making it more expensive. In 31 days, buying a bike and a helmet is going to cost 8% more. Why is the McGuinty government going to tax children who ride their bikes to school, and their parents who ride their bikes to work?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: One of the reasons I think Ontarians are suspect of New Democratic Party numbers is the following: It was this government that provided the retail sales tax exemption, and that member and her party

voted against it. You voted against it. She wants to have it both ways; she wants to tell part of the story. Those same people who buy a new bicycle are seeing their personal taxes cut; they're seeing sales tax credits unequalled anywhere in the country. There you go again, and that's why I rely on Hugh Mackenzie, of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. They say one thing; they do another thing; they distort the numbers; they refuse to acknowledge their own vote against that temporary sales tax exemption that went into place. It's absolutely shameful.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This morning at Nathan Phillips Square there were hundreds and hundreds of cycling advocates, and they all say that the McGuinty government should be making active transportation as accessible as possible, just as this government should be doing everything it can to take cars off the road, reduce smog and promote healthy lifestyles. My question is a simple one: Why, then, is the government making cycling 8% more expensive for people?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I don't imagine the leader of the NDP told the folks at Nathan Phillips Square that she voted against the reduction in the PST. I imagine that was just a convenient lapse of NDP memory. I'll bet she didn't tell the folks at Nathan Phillips Square that the NDP want us to raise the PST by 1%, having voted against the exemption on bicycles. I'll bet she didn't tell the folks at Nathan Phillips Square that the NDP government in Nova Scotia just raised their HST by 2 points, to 15 points.

The NDP want to have it both ways. They ignore their own experts; they ignore their own advocates, including the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. This is the right policy for jobs, for growth, for investments and for a healthier economy. That's why we don't support anything she says.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think it's quite hilarious that the finance minister has decided to make NDP policy for us. Thanks very much, but no thanks. Also I think it's important to note that the CCPA has put in writing this very quote: "Accordingly, it is not correct to state that the CCPA supports the HST...." So the minister is totally off base.

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A few years ago, the Premier said, "We want to encourage more Ontarians to get outdoors, spend time riding bikes as a family and with friends, or try riding to work if possible, leaving the car at home." And he added, "Together, we're building a culture of health and well-being across Ontario by encouraging more families to embrace active living."

Will the Acting Premier then explain to Ontarians since when embracing active living meant having to pay 8% more?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: You know, it's typical of the NDP they would take out of context the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Let me just read her the title of this document. It's called, Not a Tax Grab After All: A Second Look at Ontario's HST. It goes on to explain to the leader and her friends that in fact, most Ontarians will see a tax cut, some will be even and a very few, a small percentage, will pay more; generally speaking, higher-income people.

The NDP's record is on the record. You voted against the exemption. Check Hansard. We have a letter signed by her predecessor urging us to raise the PST by 1%. The record of the Nova Scotia government is crystal clear and subject to a vote.

Ontarians want consistency and a Canada response to a better future: That's what Premier McGuinty offers. That's in sharp contrast—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Acting Premier. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation broke it to Ontario families that Dalton McGuinty's HST will add between $250 and $400 a year more to the cost of gas and to fuel. For months, the McGuinty Liberals, they dodged, they ducked and they hid what they knew about the impact that Dalton McGuinty's 8% HST tax grab—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order.

Please continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Was it because you planned to bury the HST in the price of gas at the pump so nobody would notice your greedy HST tax grab?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: A range of Conservative experts have told us that the HST will create jobs. Let me tell you the start with Jack Mintz: "Within 10 years, Ontario will benefit from increased capital investment of $47 billion." We will increase annual worker incomes by $29.4 billion and we will create some 591,000 net new jobs.

I think that's why Jim Flaherty, Cheryl Gallant, Tony Clement, John Baird, even—here's what Tim Hudak said in March 2009. He said, "We understand how that (single sales tax) can help the economy."

Unfortunately, all the bluster in the world can't replace serious, sound policy that will create jobs for our children and grandchildren. It's right for our future—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Let me dumb it down for the minister. It is going to cost Ontario families between $250 to $400 more for gas in their cars once his HST tax grab takes effect. Even Stéphane Dion's carbon tax wasn't going to tax gas. British Columbia's HST doesn't tax gas either. BC made a decision to protect families from paying more for fuel in their vehicles to get them to work and to take their kids to school or to go on family vacation. British Columbia didn't want families to pay more

for fresh produce either, or other groceries that would cost more to be trucked to market. You had choices, so why did you choose to make Ontario families pay more for everyday non-discretionary items?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I would actually like to upgrade the debate in the House, as you have called on us to, refer to some facts and try to keep a cool perspective as we move forward.

Here's what another member of the CTF said: "Harmonization has some clear benefits." That's from the director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation in Saskatchewan.

This tax policy, in fact, will lower taxes for 93% of all Ontarians.

Laughter.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The opposition wants to laugh. They want to ignore the recommendations of their federal counterparts. They want to ignore their own past when they spoke in favour of it. It's no doubt that it's a difficult policy that requires a great deal of work and explanation. We're committed to that because it will create jobs for our kids and our grandchildren. After all, I think that's the most important thing that any government can do.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

M^me^ France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. A report that will be released tomorrow by Toronto Public Health finds that the H1N1 vaccination rate for Toronto residents was a mere 28% thus far. This is way below the provincial target of 75%.

Toronto Public Health's director of communicable diseases said, "The public health unit was stymied by changing directives from the provincial health ministry." Given what we've learned here in Ontario with SARS, given all the preparation time for the pandemic planning, how can the Minister of Health have bungled the communication and management of this issue so badly?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for the question. I think that, as a little time has now passed since the H1N1 crisis was upon us, now is the time to be learning lessons from that episode in our health care history.

It certainly was a time when we were working under difficult circumstances. We had an uncertain supply, as the member opposite will recall. The federal government was responsible for the supply of the vaccine; the provincial government and the health units, for the distribution of the vaccine. Because of the uncertainty of the supply of the vaccine, it meant that we were working in real time, and we did have to make decisions quickly so that we could get the vaccine to as many people as quickly as we possibly could.

I look forward to the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^me^ France Gélinas: On November 19, the minister said that "between 45% and 50% of Ontarians are planning to get the vaccine. We need to do better than that. Getting the shot is the single most important thing someone can do to protect not only themselves but the people around them...."

Minister, if that was the case, how is it that we missed the mark by so much, after all the press releases, the news releases, the ads assuring Ontarians that you were on the ball, that the targets were being met? How can Ontarians trust that this government will get it right the next time?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I understand that our chief medical officer of health is working on a report that will address that issue, as well as others.

I do think that, if we remember back to the time, last October, November, when we were dealing with this issue, there was a time when there was great demand for the vaccine, quickly followed by a time when we had the vaccine, we had the clinics, we were able to immunize people, and they did not come to the clinics in the numbers that we had hoped for. Getting the message out—getting the vaccine is the best way to protect themselves and their families is a message that we will be addressing.

I think it's only fair, though, to acknowledge that Ontario in fact had one of the best uptakes in the world. Was it perfect? No. Relative to other jurisdictions we did a very good job, thanks to the very hard work of those who worked on the front lines—

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, many families have been affected by the worldwide economic recession. Families who have a child with a developmental disability and who are facing emergency or crisis situations are looking to the government for help in these very difficult times. These families need the supports and services that developmental service agencies offer.

In 1995 and 1996, the previous government cut funding in the developmental services sector. Is the McGuinty government doing the same thing?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to thank the member from Peterborough for his question. My answer to his question is no, we are not.

Since 2003, we have invested half a billion dollars in the developmental services sector. Even in these difficult times we are increasing funding to this sector by $56 million; $36 million will go towards supporting individuals in emergency and crisis situations.

Whether it's an aging parent who needs long-term care and can no longer care for their child, or a situation where there are acute mental health concerns, we are investing and working with our agency partners to ensure that these people get the supports they need.

We have made great strides, but we know there is more to do. We look forward to continuing to work with our partners.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thank you, Minister, for that very clear and direct answer.

The McGuinty government is clearly taking a very different approach from the government of 1995 and 1996. While I acknowledge that support for those in emergency situations is crucial, I'm also concerned about the fairness of our system. Parents have told me that the current system is not transparent, that it is confusing to navigate and that it is a burden to their already-complicated lives.

Minister, what can I tell these parents? What is the government doing to address these very pressing concerns?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: What the member can tell them is that this government has heard their concerns, and $20 million will go towards the transformation of the developmental services system to make it fair, transparent, accessible and sustainable—changes that no previous government ever took on. The new system will have a single point of application for each region, consistent eligibility criteria and a single assessment tool for the entire province. Perhaps most important, we will offer choice for how people receive the supports they need.

Where other governments cut agencies' budgets, this government sees agencies as key partners in the system, and we will support them through this transformation.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a question for the Acting Premier. There are still 31 days left before the McGuinty Liberals unleash the HST tax grab, but they're already plotting the next new tax grab. Dalton McGuinty refused to rule out a tax on tap water. When Jeff Rubin proposed a carbon tax at Dalton McGuinty's summit, his caucus gave rapturous applause. Last week, the transportation minister told the Economic Club of Canada she plans to have a "conversation" about road tolls, and we all know what that means. Dalton McGuinty's economic advisors at TD Economics called for a new health tax.

My question is, which new tax grab does Dalton McGuinty have his eye on implementing first?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would caution anybody against wild speculation of that nature. The fact of the matter is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Acting Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The fact is tax policies are set in budgets. For instance, we lowered the tax rate on the first $37,000 of income; that member and his party voted against it. We created a seniors' property tax credit; that member and his party voted against it. Then we doubled the seniors' property tax credit—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: There's nothing you guys won't tax. It's unbelievable.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It is unbelievable how difficult it is to hear.

Supplementary.

Mr. Norm Miller: I think it would have been wild speculation to think that the Premier would break the signed oath that he made in 2003 not to implement new taxes.

Dalton McGuinty is a tax-and-spend Liberal. He introduced the single largest income tax increase in Ontario history with his so-called health tax in his first budget. He introduced the single largest sales tax increase in Ontario's history, the HST. Ontario families are not even officially paying the HST yet, and he's already salivating over the next new tax grab.

Why are none of the Liberal caucus or cabinet members standing up for middle-class families who Dalton McGuinty keeps taxing and taxing and taxing?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: This caucus and government are about jobs; that's why we're pursuing a large tax cut for personal and corporate contributors. We are about 600,000 net new jobs, and we're consistent about that, unlike that member and his party who used to say a harmonized sales tax was the right thing and now say it's not necessarily the wrong thing, because we still don't know why they won't repeal it or undertake to repeal it.

We've set out a policy that will create 600,000 net new jobs, increase family incomes and increase investment. It's the right policy for our children and grandchildren. It will lead to a healthier, stronger economy, even according to their own experts, their former leader and all of their federal cousins.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Mr. Peter Kormos: To the Minister of Community Safety: Two more inmates stabbed at the Don jail, a third slashed; Don jail—understaffed, overcrowded, neglected. Why is the minister ignoring the crisis at the Don jail?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: We're doing anything, everything except ignoring the crisis. Ignoring is something they would have done when they were in government. They reduced funding to correctional services. They cut staff.

Here on this side of the House, we take it very seriously. That's why we're looking at the changing face of corrections. That's why we're investing in new facilities, unlike them, who didn't invest one cent in any facility with regard to expansion. We are on a 15-year plan whereby we are creating additional spaces, meeting the ever-changing needs of the corrections community. We will continue to do that because this is a government of action, not inaction.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Kormos: The minister doesn't seem to understand that these knifings tell us that the inmates are armed with deadly weapons. Don jail—20 job vacancies as we speak. The promised institutional security team doesn't exist at the Don. Correctional staff continue to work in deplorable and dangerous conditions. When will this government finally fix the Don jail?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: The fact of the matter is, we're investing in two brand new facilities. The fact of the

matter is, we're investing in human resources. The fact of the matter is, we're investing in new technology, unlike the NDP government, who, when they were in office, cut corrections funding by $20 million in 1993 and 1994, cut funding by $13 million in 1994 and 1995, cut funding to correctional services by $25 million in 1995 and 1996. They didn't build a single jail during their time. They didn't build a single cell during their time. But they did put forth a contract called the social contract to demoralize the correctional officers. We are about building capacity, not about demeaning the correctional officers.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Minister of Education. Parents in my riding are very supportive of our move towards full-day early learning. However, I have been hearing concerns in my community about the potential impact this program may have on existing child care programs, from changes to the age groups of children accessing child care to potential impacts on staffing.

Parents understand that continued support for child care is essential to the success of full-day learning. Supporting child care as we move to full-day learning in Ontario will ensure a continuum of services for families in our communities. Can the minister please explain to my constituents and child care providers the steps our government is undertaking to minimize the impact for existing child care programs and to ensure that we maintain and enhance child care services for families across our province?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: We have been listening very carefully to the child care community and to parents. They certainly support the leadership of our government in continuing to support our youngest learners.

With respect to the support for child care facilities, we are providing for those facilities $51 million annually at full implementation to help stabilize the child care sector. In addition, we've also provided $12 million to child care facilities so they can refit their businesses to accommodate younger children. In addition to that, in our last budget we provided the $63.5 million that the federal government did not provide—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

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Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Minister. It is reassuring that municipalities and child care centres have clarity about the support our government will be providing as we transition into full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds.

Full-day learning, as we know, was a recommendation of the Premier's early learning adviser, Charles Pascal. His report offers a series of recommendations for moving ahead with early learning in Ontario and sets out a plan for how Ontario can be the first jurisdiction in North America to introduce full-day learning. A big piece of his report was the integration and coordination of services for kids and families, both while they're at school and before they are school-aged.

I have heard concerns that we are not moving quickly enough to implement Dr. Pascal's full vision. Could the minister tell us what our government is doing to better support our parents with younger kids and ensure we have the best possible conditions for our kids to learn and grow in Ontario?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Children and Youth Services, please.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm very pleased to have a chance to respond to this issue and say how proud I am to be working with Dr. Pascal at present and in the months ahead as we embark upon an exciting initiative in this province.

We're looking at ensuring that all services for children zero to six are better integrated, better coordinated, and moving from a chaotic mix of services to one where every single parent, every single caregiver, every grandparent will know what door to use with their child to get them the services they need so that they will be ready when they start all-day junior kindergarten at the age of four.

Dr. Pascal's vision is one that builds on the Best Start networks. We'll be working with communities right across the province to help ensure that every single child in Ontario gets the best possible start in life, from the day they're—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Minister of Government Services, who is responsible for the ServiceOntario program.

A few days ago when I was in Georgetown, more than one person expressed to me concern about the impending closure of the Georgetown driver and vehicle licence issuing office and the possible loss of an important local service to our community. Will the minister inform the House why he's closing the licence issuing office in Georgetown?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to thank the member for asking this question. I want to tell him that ServiceOntario is absolutely committed to providing services in Georgetown and the neighbouring areas as well. We have selected a new vendor of record through the procurement process, and the contract was awarded on April 26, 2010. The contractor, through the agreement, is supposed to open the new office within 90 days. So I'm very pleased to tell you that the new office will be operating and the residents of Georgetown will have the services they need and deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I thank the minister for that response, but I have to tell him that for longer than anyone in town can remember, the staff of the Georgetown licence issuing office have been providing outstanding,

efficient services on the main street of Georgetown. Where there have been years of courtesy and professionalism, there is now uncertainty and doubt.

Can the minister explain how this new office that he says he'll open will be an improvement? Can he assure us that the new location will be conveniently located, as the last one was, and that there will be absolutely no interruption of service to my Halton Hills constituents?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I'm actually very pleased to share with the member that we are modernizing and integrating ServiceOntario services under one roof. The new vendor we have selected is an experienced vendor and will be providing the same kind of services that had been provided before. I also want to tell you that we will not only be providing just drivers' licences and vehicle stickers, but we will be adding health card services as well. So we will be expanding services. They will be available 90 days after the contract was signed, and it will be by an experienced operator.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Actually, I'd like a page to bring this over to the Minister of Health, please.

This question is to the Minister of Health on behalf of Robert Brackenbury and his family. Mr. Brackenbury sent the minister a letter on May 14 about the surgery that he urgently needs for a grossly herniated bowel and an aneurysm. These serious health conditions follow cancer surgery that he had last October.

Mr. Brackenbury is a senior who lives in Kitchener–Waterloo. He is described by his doctor as a survivor, but he is now facing lengthy and unconscionable surgical delays.

The McGuinty government repeatedly claims that health care will be there for people where and when they need it. When will the minister do something to ensure that that's going to be the case for Mr. Brackenbury?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Of course, I cannot speak to this particular case, but I'm happy to look into it.

I think the success of our government in bringing down surgical wait times is one of the true successes of this government. We have gone from not even knowing what wait times are to measuring wait times, publicly reporting wait times and actually developing a strategy to bring those wait times down. We have been very successful. In fact, we have been able to bring down wait times by over a year in some cases.

We are still working to continue the improvement, and as I say, I will look into this particular case to understand what's happening here.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I appreciate that because this letter was sent to all of us about two weeks ago—myself, the minister and others.

Mr. Brackenbury is just one of many who can't access timely health care in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. He has an open wound on his stomach measuring 28 centimetres by 23 centimetres. I've sent the pictures over to the minister to indicate his condition. Unless his aneurysm can be dealt with quickly so that his intestinal surgery can go ahead in August, Mr. Brackenbury knows that he faces a life or death situation. His doctors want to operate quickly but they can't.

Will the minister commit today to look into Mr. Brackenbury's case and get him the urgent treatment he desperately needs before that aneurysm bursts and he dies?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said in the first question, yes, I will absolutely commit to looking into this particular case to understand why this surgery is not proceeding.

I think it is important that the member opposite acknowledge the progress we have made on wait times—and it is not just our numbers. The cancer quality index report was released last week and it is publicly available. It demonstrates that we've actually gone from being a laggard when it comes to radiation, for example, to being one of the leading jurisdictions in the country when it comes to wait times for that particular procedure.

As I say, this is a government that is committed to transparency and to public reporting of wait times. That public reporting allows us to make the strategic investments we need to make to continue improving health care.

LIQUOR LICENSING

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. The World Cup is here and in South Africa for the first time on that continent. Many of us are huge soccer fans. In the last month I have been in Richmond Hill, Windsor, London and upcoming in Peterborough with my son, who's a keeper for the boys under 12. They've won three tournaments this month for Kitchener Spirit.

Speaking of spirits, the city of Kitchener passed a resolution in council regarding the request for licensed establishments to extend their liquor serving hours by one hour during the World Cup. In the spirit of the World Cup, bar and restaurant owners in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga have asked to extend their serving hours to attract more World Cup fans.

Can the minister advise the House what she is doing to address this issue?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Thank you to the member for the question. I am happy to tell this House that on Sunday—yesterday—at Ace Family Restaurant in Hamilton, I announced that Ontario will allow licensed bars and restaurants to serve alcohol an hour earlier during the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Ontario is one of the most diverse, multicultural communities in the world, and our government recognizes the significance of the World Cup to many cultural groups in the province. That's why it's making this special exemption to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario's policy on extending bar and restaurant hours.

The games are being televised from South Africa, which represents a six-hour time difference within Ontario. Some games will start as early as 7:30.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: There will be great support for all 32 qualifying countries right here in Ontario, and it's a great opportunity for businesses to generate further revenue, such as the Edelweiss Tavern—Lorne and Jason Miller—and Bob MacMillan of the Heidelberg in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga.

But my first concern as a soccer mom and a former coach has always been the safety of my sons, their teammates and all the youth in Ontario. I'd like to know how the government will address concerns that some may have around safety in the province by promoting the consumption of alcohol?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: That's a very important question. Our government understands the need for social responsibility with relation to the service of alcohol. With this extension, we have balanced the requests from businesses and World Cup fans, while understanding the need to maintain appropriate standards for the responsible service of alcohol.

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During the extended period, municipalities will be responsible for enforcing the Liquor Licence Act. But municipalities do have a choice. They have two options: They can decide to participate in allowing local establishments to serve an hour earlier, or the other option is to opt out in writing by sending a letter to the Registrar of Alcohol and Gaming.

It's an exciting time in Ontario. We're really glad that the World Cup is here.

PEDIATRIC FORENSIC PATHOLOGY INQUIRY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, five weeks ago, I asked when you would have answers for victims of Dr. Charles Smith. The Premier said, "Very, very soon." You said, "Very shortly."

"Very, very soon" is long past; "very shortly" is up. Do you have a compensation process ready to begin for the victims of Dr. Charles Smith?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: We all meant exactly what we said. The cases that are the subject of the question span many, many years and many decades, including many years when my friend sat in government.

We had a very important inquiry. Commissioner Goudge came forward with some extremely important recommendations, and one of the things he asked us was, instead of requiring every potential plaintiff to go through the normal civil litigation system, which they are able to do, can you find a shortcut for all of these different and disparate fact situations? We had a three-party expert group. They've been working very hard. We are coming forward very soon and we're quite hopeful of achieving the promise.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Minister, after a year and a half, you have the nerve to use the term "shortcut"? No one believes you anymore. If your words were said in good faith, you would have an answer. We all agree these problems are complex, but I disagree with you that a year and a half is a justifiable time to wait for a solution.

Minister, are you waiting for the summer to avoid critical assessment of your decision in this House? If five weeks doesn't define "very shortly," what does? Or will you have an answer for this House before it rises?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I don't know about the honourable member, but I'll be working on June 5, I'll be working on June 6, I'll be working on June 7, and I'm surprised you aren't.

I'm sure whenever we come down with the answer, we expect you to be able to read it; we expect you to be able to criticize it; we expect you to be able to comment on it. I mean, come on—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Members will please come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member from Halton knows the rules. If he's not satisfied with the answer, he can file a late show with the clerks' table.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Minister?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: These issues are enormously complex, and that's why Justice Goudge asked if—if—we could come up with something. That's why we asked some very well-thought-of experts to give us advice. That's why we're attempting to do something that the law doesn't easily do, which is to reconcile very disparate claims in very different circumstances through one approach. You could, in different cases, make these a class action, but it would be very difficult in a civil litigation system to do that. We're working very hard, we'll be able to report, and whenever we do, I know my friend will be able—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Housing. Last week, a group led by the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation launched a landmark legal challenge to address the appalling lack of housing in Ontario and across the country. The applicants say that the Ontario government has failed to address homelessness and housing over the past decade. This challenge has come because this government continues to drag its feet on affordable housing. To the minister: Will this government oppose the legal challenge?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Of course, this matter is going to be before an adjudicative body, and the member will know that it would probably be inappropriate for me to comment on it at that time. She's a long-time member of the House now, and she knows that.

However, I do want to say that I know the member would want to extol some of the virtues of what has been done by our Parliament lately. I want to give credit to you: $622 million, over two years, contributed by the province, matched by our federal partners. That is a tremendous amount of money that we're investing in affordable housing in this province. I think we're already seeing, in various communities across the province, the difference that that is making. We have taken a number of other initiatives as well: rent supplements; we are fixing up the buildings that are there so that people—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I assume, by his response, that means that they are opposing the legal challenge by housing activists across the province. This government's record on housing, by the way, is absolutely terrible.

Today, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association and the Ontario region of the Co-operative Housing Association have shown that average rents increased three times the rate of inflation across the province in 2009. Waiting lists for assisted housing have over 142,000 families throughout Ontario. One in five Ontario renters are still spending more than half their income on housing. When will this government release its affordable housing plan, the long-ballyhooed one, to address this absolutely shameful record?

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's a subjective evaluation, using the terminology that you did. I won't repeat it because in politics you don't repeat those charges.

However, I want to say this: First of all, I remember the rent guidelines under the NDP—I hate to go back into history. Under this government, under the present Liberal administration, the increases are the lowest they've been since we've had rent control in the province of Ontario. They used to be skyrocketing under the NDP. I know you didn't mean to do it, but it happened; it's a fact of life.

I want to say as well that units built under the affordable housing program are required to have rents at or below 80% of the average market rent. Harvey Cooper says, "Recent government initiatives show that the province understands the central role of housing to people's lives and the economy"—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Dave Levac: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. As Ontario's economy begins to recover from the global economic downturn, we have an opportunity to make our province more competitive and straightforward. Ontario currently provides the point-of-sale exemption for the provincial sales tax to First Nations in Ontario. With the move to the harmonized sales tax, the federal government must now provide that exemption.

My question for the government is: What are we doing to make sure that the First Nations' exemption is indeed maintained? I understand that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and the Minister of Revenue have been working closely with the Chiefs of Ontario, and they've been able to come to a memorandum of agreement regarding the point-of-sale exemption. On May 27, they did sign that memorandum.

Recent reports indicate that Minister Flaherty has signalled that he may be interested in a discussion. What steps have we taken—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for the question. I particularly want to thank him for his leadership on this file and his approach to it, and the work that he has been able to show us about how we have to stand shoulder to shoulder with First Nations in the province of Ontario to be able to get something that we need in this province, which is the federal government to agree to administer the point-of-sale exemption that we have requested of the federal government under the HST. It's why the Premier and Minister Duncan and myself have written our counterparts.

But for us to be able to get to that, we need to stand shoulder to shoulder. I was particularly pleased to hear from our Minister of Aboriginal Affairs that just recently, the political confederacy did ratify the memorandum of agreement that was entered into by the two of us and Chief Toulouse. It's by working together that we'll be able to get to where we want to be, which is a point-of-sale exemption—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

VISITOR

Mr. Dave Levac: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm sorry. I know it's unorthodox, but I wanted to let you know that the other half of the plethora of Brant came. I want to introduce Walter Gretzky, lord mayor of Brant. I want to thank him for being here today.

SPECIAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table an annual greenhouse gas progress report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario entitled Broadening Ontario's Climate Change Policy Agenda.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.

SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that sign-language interpreters may be present in the east gallery to interpret proceedings for guests in the gallery.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like all members to join me in welcoming a guest to the Legislature today: former East York member Gary Malkowski from the 35th Parliament. Welcome back to Queen's Park today, Gary.

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to welcome members of the Azeri community of the greater Toronto area as they celebrate their Independence Day. They actually celebrated Independence Day on Friday, May 28, so I welcome them in the public gallery.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GROVES HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION

Mr. Ted Arnott: One of the most eloquent public figures of our time once exhorted his nation, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

This call to action has motivated generations of volunteers around the world to get involved, help organize, build their communities or lend a hand to those in need, all for the public good.

I was born six months before John F. Kennedy died and I first saw the light of day at the Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus. In the 20 years that I've been privileged to serve in this Legislature, I've always been very impressed in the extreme by the Groves Hospital Volunteer Association, who have taken President Kennedy's suggestion and made it their own.

Later this afternoon, the 250 members of the volunteer association will celebrate the fact that their activities have raised $1 million for the hospital, fulfilling a pledge they made seven years ago. This comes on top of the half-million dollars they have raised over the past two years for our new CT scanner—raised one year faster than originally planned.

This amazing community success story didn't just happen. It involves literally thousands and thousands of hours of volunteer labour at two Opportunity Shops in Fergus and Arthur, as well as the hospital gift shop and TV rental service for patients—that and a sense of community spirit that is second to none in the province.

In closing, I want to thank all in the Groves Hospital Volunteer Association for the great work they do. Once again, as I have so many times in the past, I urge this government to show its appreciation by giving Groves the approval and support to move forward to the next stages of planning for the new Groves hospital that our community will soon need in this 21st century.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Peter Kormos: Fourteen-year-old Stefanie Nadeau of Welland is a beautiful young woman who lives each day in excruciating pain, and there doesn't seem to be room for her in Dalton McGuinty's health care system.

Paul Missiuna, orthopaedic surgeon and in fact a pediatric orthopaedic specialist, writes to me telling me that this young woman, Miss Nadeau, has a rare condition for her age of a curvature of 64 degrees of her spine from T6 to T12. She requires immediate surgery if she's to be relieved of the pain and if she's going to begin to recover from this health condition. But there's no room for her; there's no space for her; there's no time for her in Dalton McGuinty's hospitals here in the province of Ontario.

Dr. Missiuna is ready, the operating room personnel are ready, the nurses are ready, but the waiting lists persist. This young woman, Stefanie Nadeau, lives out each day as a child growing into an adult, knowing that the only thing she will remember is the daily pain day after day.

I say it's time for Mr. McGuinty to step up to the plate and create some room for Stefanie Nadeau and so many others who are stuck on long, unconscionable and painful waiting lists in our health care system today.

FRANK ALVAREZ

Mr. Charles Sousa: I am pleased to announce that on the morning of June 5, during this year's Portugal Day Parade, the city of Toronto will be honouring an outstanding Canadian of Portuguese heritage, the dynamic Mr. Frank Alvarez.

Frank immigrated to Canada in 1967 and became a media icon. He is president and CEO of CIRV Radio and FPTV, Festival Portuguese Television.

Thanks to the efforts of Jose Eustaquio and the Alliance of Portuguese Clubs and Associations of Ontario, Frank will be formally recognized with a street name dedication along the Dundas Street West corridor from Shaw to Ossington. This vibrant community area will be unveiled as Frank Alvarez Way.

Frank is being honoured for his tremendous contributions to the community. His leadership has inspired radiothons to support many charities that helped victims of tragic natural disasters such as the devastating floods in Mozambique and Madeira.

Frank's exceptional service includes being co-founder of the Canada-Portugal Chamber of Commerce and the Vila Gaspar Corte Real, and past president of the Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals.

Frank has been applauded for his exemplary work by many levels of government and organizations. In 1998, he was inducted into the Order of Portugal as Commendador of the order of merit, and he received the Canadian Ethnic Journalists and Writers Club award in 1999. That same year, he received a key to the city of Toronto.

His service has been recognized by others, including the Queen's Jubilee Medal and the commemorative medal of the 125th anniversary of Canadian Confederation.

This well-deserved unveiling of Frank Alvarez Way appropriately occurs during Portugal Week festivities. As

communities around the world join and commemorate June 10 Portugal Day and Dia de Camoes, local organizations and volunteers have asked me to welcome everyone here to participate in the special occasion to honour Frank and Portugal Day.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly and its many friends, congratulations, Frank, and happy Portugal Day.

FRUIT WINES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the fruit wineries, who are here today for the fruit wine tasting this evening, and I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on the work you have done to promote great Ontario food, including fruit wine, in this Legislative Assembly.

At last year's fruit wine tasting, we were celebrating that Bill 132, introduced by my colleague Bob Runciman, would be getting committee hearings. That bill would give fruit wineries access to more consumers by allowing fruit wines to be sold at Ontario farmers' markets.

During committee in December, the OFA said, "Bill 132 just makes sense from a market development, rural economic development and tourism development sense." But the Liberal members on the committee didn't support it. They voted down every single clause of the bill, even the title.

Less than a year earlier, this Legislature unanimously gave the bill second reading. Liberal members supported it enthusiastically; not one spoke against it. In fact, the PA to the Minister of Agriculture said, "The idea falls in line with OMAFRA's commitment to encourage rural economic development and promote innovative and unique branding and marketing opportunities for producers in this province." But the Liberals in the committee voted it down.

Bill 132 addressed the difficulties that fruit wineries have getting their product to consumers. The current LCBO system doesn't work for them, and they need a way to deliver their products to consumers.

This evening, I hope members will do more than just taste great Ontario fruit wines. I hope they will talk to the people who run the wineries and listen to their challenges.

CARLETON TAVERN

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I'm pleased to rise today and share with the House a milestone for the Carleton Tavern, a landmark of the Hintonburg community in the heart of my riding of Ottawa Centre.

The Carleton is, of course, a favourite of residents and workers in downtown Ottawa for refreshments and live shows, but they also do good work for their community.

One of the most prominent events is a free, open-to-all Christmas dinner, courtesy of owners Simon and Sam Saikaley. This annual event is where many members of the community come together to celebrate the holidays and make much-needed gift donations for kids and adults in need.

The Carleton Tavern also hosts a free Thanksgiving dinner for those in our community who are less fortunate, and is frequently utilized by members of our community as a venue for grassroots fundraising and awareness events on a variety of topics.

With this great contribution to our neighbourhood, both as a place of gathering and friendship, and also as an institution that gives back, I'm pleased to commend the Carleton Tavern for their role in my community, and congratulate them on 75 successful years in Hintonburg. Keep up the good work.

1310

FRESHWATER SUMMIT

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to announce the start of the upcoming 2010 Freshwater Summit taking place on June 1 and 2 in Parry Sound–Muskoka. This forum on fresh water seeks to highlight issues and trends surrounding the management of fresh water and will strive to develop sound policy options to deal with those issues.

The goal of the summit is to identify the stresses on inland lakes and rivers and then develop a communiqué on proper freshwater management. That communiqué will then be presented to the provincial and federal government as well as the Canadian contingent at the G8.

I am proud to announce that the summit is being hosted by the town of Bracebridge, the district municipality of Muskoka, the Muskoka Watershed Council and Nipissing University. The forum consists of six keynote speakers, including Henry Lickers, Norm Yan, David Schindler, John Smol, Maude Barlow and our Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller. A parallel summit is being held for high school students across the Muskoka region in order to educate youth about their role in protecting our fresh water.

Freshwater management is a critical issue, as it has economic, social and environmental implications. The 2010 Freshwater Summit is an important step in developing a comprehensive plan to protect our inland lakes and rivers. I would invite all those interested in the future of our fresh water to attend.

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Jim Brownell: I rise in the House today to recognize the many volunteers from the township of South Stormont in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. Recently, the township of South Stormont held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Gala at the Spot Light banquet hall. Eighteen volunteer communities were represented and honoured at the event, an event that celebrates the volunteer contributions made by the countless volunteers of the township in 2009.

Robert Thompson, a resident of Ingleside, was the recipient of the 2009 Fran Laflamme Volunteer of the Year Award in recognition of his long-standing volunteerism to the community. This prestigious award is presented annually by the township of South Stormont, and it

honours one of the township's outstanding volunteer members, the late Fran Laflamme. During her lifetime she was a model of volunteer commitment to community.

Robert "Bob" Thompson, a retired educator from Rothwell-Osnabruck High School, in his hometown of Ingleside, has volunteered as a youth coach and organizer for more than four decades. He is more recognized for his contributions on the hard court. Thompson has been a great advocate for youth basketball programs and continues to coach numerous teams at Rothwell-Osnabruck. He is also recognized as one of the founders and the first president of the South Stormont Sports Hall of Fame, which was established in 2005. He currently contributes his work to this committee and is an integral part of the organizing committee for the annual induction ceremony for the hall of fame.

Through their energy, creativity and thoughtfulness, our volunteers contribute in making our communities healthier places to live. Volunteerism is alive and well in the township of South Stormont.

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Reza Moridi: I rise in this House today to honour the people of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as they have just celebrated their Republic Day on May 28. Republic Day commemorates the day Azerbaijan first declared its independence from the Russian Empire in 1918, becoming the first-ever Muslim democratic republic.

The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was crushed by the Soviet forces in 1920. In its two short years of independence, Azerbaijan made great strides in state building, education and economic growth. The republic was even ahead of many western countries in granting the right to vote for women in 1918.

Azerbaijan's second opportunity for freedom and independence began in 1991 after the collapse of the USSR. Modern Azerbaijan is a secular democratic republic. In recent years, Azerbaijan has reached remarkable progress in improving its Legislature, boosting the economy and reducing poverty.

The achievements of Azerbaijan were acknowledged by the World Bank and the World Economic Forum. Azerbaijan is promoting trans-regional projects, first of all, in oil and gas, delivering oil and gas from the Caspian sea to global markets via a network of pipelines.

I would ask my colleagues to join me to congratulate the people of Azerbaijan on the 92nd anniversary of Republic Day and to renew our commitment to further develop and strengthen the bonds between our two peoples.

Remarks in Azerbaijani.

LARRY RUDD

Mr. Dave Levac: I'll be seeking unanimous consent for a moment's silence after this statement.

On May 24 at 12:30 p.m. local time, Trooper Larry John Rudd, a 26-year-old soldier, was killed by an IED in Panjwayi, near Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Trooper Rudd was the fourth member of the Canadian military killed in Afghanistan in just one month. Trooper Rudd was on a routine security operation when he lost his life. He was known to his colleagues and his friends as the Gentle Giant. Someone who never complained, a friend to all, Trooper Rudd stood tall, both in his height at six foot six and in his maturity, by showing the utmost commitment, dedication and sacrifice to the Canadian Forces.

Trooper Rudd moved to Brantford at the age of 7 and made Brantford his home, where in his formative years he was a bouncer at a local bar: respected, befriended and never violent. He joined the armed forces in 2008. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Dragoons and served with the First Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment based in Petawawa, Ontario.

Trooper Rudd was the 146th Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2009. Panjwayi district is the birthplace of the Taliban and is notoriously dangerous. He took it in stride. In June 2008, another Brantfordian, Captain Richard Leary, was killed there as well. Unfortunately, dozens of Canadians have been injured or killed in this district.

I can't begin to imagine the emotions that Trooper Rudd's family is feeling today. My thoughts and prayers at this time are with his mother, Helen Zuidema.

I deeply admire Trooper Rudd's bravery. I had the opportunity to meet and know him, and want to take a moment for us to remember him and all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and have given life and limb.

Let me offer an ancient Gaelic blessing to the family and friends in our community.

Deep peace of the running wave to you.

Deep peace of the flowing air to you.

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.

Deep peace of the shining stars to you.

Deep peace of the gentle night to you.

Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.

Deep peace of Christ, the light of the world, to you.

God bless Trooper Rudd.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask all members and guests to observe a moment of silence in memory of Trooper Rudd.

The House observed a moment's silence.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Je demande la permission de déposer un rapport du Comité permanent de la politique sociale et je propose son adoption.

I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption, and send it to you by way of page Emma.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes / Projet de loi 21, Loi réglementant les maisons de retraite.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 20, 2010, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I beg leave to present a report on community mental health from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

1320

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: This is a report stemming from the auditor's report section 3.06, dealing with community mental health.

This report of the auditor outlined the many weaknesses with regard to the reporting and information we have about community health across the province of Ontario. I think it's fair to say that the public accounts committee felt that there needs to be significant improvements in the information which the Ministry of Community and Social Services is receiving in order for them to make proper allocations of resources across our province.

Presently, our system is basically one of giving more money to communities that have existing mental health services. There are 330 various agencies across our province delivering these kinds of services. The committee, I think, feels—as did the auditor—that there isn't a good enough grasp by the ministry of what services are being provided in what communities across our province. This leads, of course, to an unevenness or an unfairness in some communities, in not having the same kinds of mental health services as other communities have. Therefore, the majority of our recommendations deal with asking the ministry to report to the committee on how they are improving their collection of information and setting benchmarks for the provision of mental health services across the province of Ontario.

It is hoped that the committee will urge the ministry to speed up its process of finding the information that is necessary, so that the ministry and future governments can be fairer in allocating resources to all communities across Ontario; so that we can ensure that it's not just one particular community that has a service for handling a problem for one of our citizens, but that all communities across Ontario will be treated equally.

With that, I will adjourn the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE AGAINST PICKETING ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 VISANT À PROTÉGER LES GENS VULNÉRABLES CONTRE LE PIQUETAGE

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 83, An Act to prevent picketing of supported group living residences / Projet de loi 83, Loi visant à empêcher le piquetage devant les résidences de groupe avec services de soutien.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Mr. Peter Kormos: On division.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Carried on division.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The bill governs the picketing of supported group living residences in connection with labour disputes. Section 3 of the bill would prohibit the picketing of supported group living residences where persons with developmental disabilities reside.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT (PROTECTION OF DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE ET À LA FAMILLE (PROTECTION DES ENFANTS MENACÉS PAR LA DROGUE)

Mr. Dunlop moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 84, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to provide protection to drug endangered children / Projet de loi 84, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille pour protéger les enfants menacés par la drogue.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: The bill amends the Child and Family Services Act to add drug-endangered children as a category of children in need of protection. A child is drug-endangered in circumstances such as those where a child is exposed to a substance that is used to illegally manufacture an illegal drug or is exposed to that manufacture or production.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT ACT (STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS FOR HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE (COMITÉ PERMANENT DES COMPTES PUBLICS SUR LES SOINS DE SANTÉ ET L'ÉDUCATION)

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 85, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act to establish the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for Health Care and Education / Projet de loi 85, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative pour créer le Comité permanent des comptes publics sur les soins de santé et l'éducation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: The bill amends the Legislative Assembly Act to establish a new Standing Committee on Public Accounts for Health Care and Education.

Being that the ministries responsible for health care and education utilize in excess of 62% of the provincial budget, this bill establishes a new committee whose sole focus is working with the Auditor General directly in completely reviewing the ministries' operational and fiscal aspects pertaining to health care and education in the province of Ontario.

PROTECTION OF MINORS IN AMATEUR SPORTS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PROTECTION DES MINEURS PARTICIPANT À DES SPORTS AMATEURS

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 86, An Act to provide protection for minors participating in amateur sports / Projet de loi 86, Loi visant à protéger les mineurs qui participent à des sports amateurs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: The bill enacts the Protection of Minors in Amateur Sports Act, 2010, with respect to amateur sports programs in which persons under 18 years of age may participate. An organizer of such a program is required to obtain a copy of the criminal record from a police force for every person who acts in a position in the program that involves dealing with persons under 18 years of age on a regular basis, whether or not the position is for remuneration. If the police force is legally prohibited from releasing a copy of the criminal record, the organizer is required instead to obtain a written response to that effect. The organizer must obtain a copy of the criminal record or the written response, as the case may be, no earlier than four years before the day on which the program begins or no later than 90 days after the day on which the program begins.

The positions affected include the positions of referee, other officials, trainer or coach. A person is not allowed to hold any of these positions without consenting to have a police force release a copy of his or her criminal record to the organizer.

The minister responsible for the administration of the act can appoint investigators to enter and inspect any premises without a warrant if the investigator has reasonable grounds to believe that an organizer of an amateur sport program is using it to run the program or to store a copy of the criminal record of a person acting in an affected position in respect of the program.

It is an offence to contravene the requirements that the act imposes on organizers and affected persons.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding order 98(g), notice for ballot item 32 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 12 midnight on Monday, May 31, 2010.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1330 to 1335.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 18. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Gerretsen, John	Meilleur, Madeleine
Arthurs, Wayne	Hoskins, Eric	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Jaczek, Helena	Murray, Glen R.
Bartolucci, Rick	Jeffrey, Linda	Naqvi, Yasir
Bentley, Christopher	Johnson, Rick	Pendergast, Leeanna
Best, Margarett	Kular, Kuldip	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramal, Khalil
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Elliott, Christine	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Gélinas, France	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Prue, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Tabuns, Peter
Clark, Steve	Kormos, Peter	Yakabuski, John
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Paul	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 39; the nays are 17.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome in the west gallery Charles Beer, who represented York North in the 34th and 35th Parliaments. Charles, welcome back to Queen's Park today.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

SEMAINE NATIONALE POUR L'INTÉGRATION DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Today marks the beginning of National Access Awareness Week. It's a time for Canadians to think about what it means to live in a society that welcomes people of all abilities.

Nous célébrons cette année le cinquième anniversaire de l'adoption de la Loi de 2005 sur l'accessibilité pour les personnes handicapées de l'Ontario par l'Assemblée législative.

Under the act, we are developing province-wide accessibility standards to break down barriers to make key areas of everyday life more accessible for us all. Once in place, it will be the most comprehensive set of accessibility standards in the world. It's important for us to realize what this will mean for our province.

When people with disabilities cannot fully participate in our community, we miss out on our own potential.

Improving accessibility is critical to strengthening our economy. Canadians with disabilities spend $25 billion every year and influence the spending decisions of 12 to 15 million other customers. Accessible businesses will be better positioned to attract these customers and will also be able to capitalize on an expanded labour market that includes Ontarians with disabilities.

N'oubliez pas non plus les personnes âgées. La population de la province vieillit. Cela veut dire qu'un plus grand nombre de personnes vont être confrontées à des obstacles qui leur étaient étrangers auparavant.

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Accessible customer service is now a requirement for our broader public sector, and 96% of Ontario's broader public sector has either reported full compliance with the standard or is in the process of reporting.

Dans moins de deux ans, la norme d'accessibilité pour les services à la clientèle entrera en vigueur dans les entreprises privées et les organisations à but non lucratif. Nous tendons la main à ces organisations en leur fournissant les outils et l'information dont elles ont besoin pour assumer leurs engagements.

The development of the information and communication employment and transportation standards is currently under way. During the public review process, we heard consistently that businesses want the requirements of the standards to be aligned. We listened and we agree.

Notre prochaine étape consiste à incorporer les trois normes—emploi, transport, et information et communications—dans un projet de règlement rationalisé. Nous afficherons l'information au sujet de l'harmonisation de ces normes dans les prochains mois pour satisfaire au processus d'examen public.

This integrated approach will make the standards easier to understand and implement. It will offer greater flexibility and reduce costs and regulatory burden, all in keeping with our government's Open for Business initiative.

More information about the progress we are making towards an accessible Ontario is available in the 2009 annual report on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which I have tabled in this House today.

I am also pleased to table the independent review of the AODA that was recently completed by Mr. Charles Beer, who is in the House today. From September to December 2009, Mr. Beer consulted extensively with individuals and organizations across the province. I would like to thank Mr. Beer for his dedication to this project.

Le rapport de M. Beer formule des recommandations spécifiques. Pour certaines d'entre elles, comme l'harmonisation des normes, je suis fière de vous annoncer que nous avons déjà fait de grandes avancées.

The progress we are making will make Ontario a world leader in accessibility. As we kick off National Access Awareness Week 2010, that is something we can all be proud of.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone in the House and those who have helped us to develop the standard. Thank you for your co-operation, thank you for making Ontario more accessible, and thank you for making Ontario a leader in accessibility.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to mark National Access Awareness Week. Each year, National Access Awareness Week encourages Canadians to think about and find ways to break down the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. The barrier can be a building or a space design that limits mobility; communication that limits understanding of information or lack of technology that prevents information access; potentially limiting policies and practices; and attitudes that foster discrimination. "Access" means more than just removing barriers; it means changes in attitudes and supports that allow all people with visible or invisible disabilities to be part of community life.

People with learning, developmental and psychiatric disabilities or other invisible impairments should not be forgotten when we strive for equal access. National Access Awareness Week promotes access for all people with disabilities, including people with mobility, sensory, non-visible and intellectual disabilities. It is very important that we raise awareness for accessibility standards not only during this week of recognition but every day. I fully support the intent to break down the barriers for Ontarians with disabilities.

I recently had the opportunity to participate, alongside some of my colleagues in the House, in the Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario's Chair-Leaders awareness event. I quickly found out my first barrier to accessibility not too long after I got into my chair that day. As I made my way to my office in this building, I realized that I could open my door and I could knock on my door, but I could not get in my door. I had to have my assistant come and open it for me. As I made my way through the narrow doorway to get to my office, I again had to ask someone to move a table so that I could have access to my own office.

While this experience gave me a deeper appreciation for what people in wheelchairs experience daily, I know that I only experienced a small portion of what that experience is like. I am sure there are many other daily tasks like grocery shopping, transportation and work that are more difficult and more time-consuming, which I did not get to experience.

I was happy to participate in this event and enjoyed meeting members of the Ontario branch of the Canadian Paraplegic Association and discussing with them the challenges they face with accessibility. I want to thank the Canadian Paraplegic Association for their advocacy and for involving MPPs and other politicians across the province in creating awareness. I'm sure this will bring much discussion going forward as the province and municipalities discuss accessibility issues within their own communities.

I also want to thank David Lepofsky, the AODA and members of the disabled community who participated and presented at the committee on Bill 231, the Election Statute Law Amendment Act. I was happy to see that the amendments of the PC caucus addressed some of the concerns of the differently abled in our community. In all, our party had seven motions accepted by the government, which will ultimately strengthen accessibility during Ontario elections.

That said, a number of our attempts to improve accessibility were rejected. We tried to ensure involvement of the disability community by requiring the Chief Electoral Officer to consult with Ontarians. We tried to make information more accessible by requiring that documents be available on an accessible website. We tried to ensure that the most cost-effective and accessible means of voting in a provincial election would be available to all Ontarians. However, as I said, these proposed amendments, among others, were turned down.

While we made some progress in ensuring that our elections process is fair and accessible to all Ontarians, we know we can do better, and it is incumbent on us as legislators to keep that pressure on.

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to the minister, and she started by making the statement: "It's time for Canadians to think about what it means to live in a society that welcomes people of all abilities." I don't disagree with that statement, but I think a much stronger statement—and the statement that should have been made—is that it's time for Canadians and this Legislature to take all the initiatives that are necessary to make full participation a reality, and that's what I'd like to talk about today.

It was five years ago when we were in this House that the government introduced a bill and talked about making participation a reality for everyone in Ontario. Unfortunately, I think the one drawback to that bill was that it has a 25-year time span, and 25 years is a long time for people to wait to have equality. Twenty-five years is a long time in a government's or in any society's life to tell people they have to wait and wait. A child born at the time that legislation was proclaimed would be finished university and starting a job, never having known what it was like to have full equality.

I stand here today saying that I celebrate the contribution of people with disabilities, but I think the government needs to do far more than simply talk about it. The government needs to do far more than just say we're having more reports and more studies, and two years from now there are going to be some regulation changes. I believe that the government has an obligation, through the financial levers it has, to do a number of things.

The first is to start building supportive housing, especially for people who have disabilities. That would include individuals with mental health issues, addictions and disabilities of all types, so that they have supportive

housing, because we very often find that people with disabilities are among our poorest citizens.

The second thing that I think the government needs to do is increase the number of supportive housing units that are available to people with disabilities. I think we need to change that ratio, so that people have full access.

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We have to start looking at our attendant care legislation. For example, people with spinal cord injuries require more hours of attendant service than are currently available, and I am given to understand that most people are limited to three hours a day of attendant service once they find themselves in a chair, once they find, through spinal injures, that they're no longer able to care totally for themselves. They are limited, most times, to three hours a day for attendant service, and I think we can do better.

We need to start looking at the inadequate Ontario disability support incomes for our most vulnerable people and those who are disabled, because right now, it's a maximum of about $1,000 a month, which is totally inadequate to live in anything except poverty. It is tantamount, if you are disabled, for many people, to have your life lived in poverty. There's no real way out of it. I think we need to look, if people are disabled, that we can do better than simply giving them $1,000 a month. I would suggest that if the government can find monies to bail out banks and to give tax breaks to the wealthy, then they should be able to find money for our most needy citizens.

I think the government has also removed key income supports, such as the special diet allowance, which isn't doing much to help those who are disabled in our community.

My colleague from the Conservative Party talked about changes to the Election Act. New Democrats voted against that act, not because we didn't like what was in the act but because we didn't think it did enough for the disabled community. David Lepofsky came and suggested some 20 amendments that could strengthen the act so that persons with disabilities could run for office and could vote. We put forward all 20 of those amendments. Every single one of them was defeated by the government. Accessible voting places was defeated by the government, accessible returning offices was defeated by the government, accessible ballots was defeated by the government, and accessible all-candidates meetings was defeated by the government. I think we, as a Legislature, have to say that we can do more, and we should have done more in that.

Last but not least, I want to just say that Gary Malkowski, a former member, is here, and he is advocating flashing-light smoke detectors. It's a small item. I hope the government is listening to that one.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to read a petition. It's actually from Northumberland Hills Hospital. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the government-appointed local health integration network (LHIN) has approved a budget proposal by the Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) that includes plans to close 26 hospital beds, outpatient rehabilitation and the diabetes education clinic; and

"Whereas these cuts will leave no outpatient rehabilitation (including physio- and occupational therapy) available for patients in Northumberland county;"—Lou Rinaldi's riding—"and

"Whereas this cut leaves all patients with insulin-dependent diabetes without education and support that is vital to prevent serious health decline; and

"Whereas these cuts will result in for-profit privatization of hospital beds and services and new user fees for patients; and

"Whereas private, for-profit, unaccredited retirement homes are not safe or appropriate to house patients who need professional nursing and health care; and

"Whereas the NHH is considered a very efficient hospital in comparison with peer hospitals and the people of west Northumberland have already made a huge sacrifice regarding hospital services;

"Therefore be it resolved:

"That the McGuinty government act immediately to protect patients in Northumberland Hills, fund the hospital to maintain the current services, and stop the hospital bed and service cuts."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of the coalition as well as the hospital employees.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^me^ France Gélinas: I have a petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under" certain "conditions...; and

"Whereas" since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the Clerk with Emma.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr. Dave Levac: I appreciate this opportunity. This is dedicated on behalf of the hard-working members from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale and Hamilton

Mountain. This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas MTCU has notified Neighbour to Neighbour Centre (Hamilton) of its intent to close its employment services effective July 31, 2010;

"The Hamilton Mountain community requests that funding be continued so that Neighbour to Neighbour Centre (Hamilton) can continue to offer employment services and support to the most vulnerable in our community."

I sign my name to this petition on behalf of those two hard-working members.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank Ted Shuh and the folks from Community Living North Grenville for the petition. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 80;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

I'll sign the petition and present it to the table. It's been certified and I'll give it to page Dylan.

SERVICES DIAGNOSTIQUES

M^me^ France Gélinas: J'ai une pétition des gens de Sudbury.

« Attendu que l'Ontario fait de la tomographie par émission de positons (TEP), un service de santé assuré par le régime public pour les patients atteints du cancer et de maladies cardiaques …; et

« Attendu que » depuis « octobre 2009, des TEP assurées » sont « effectuées à Ottawa, à London, à Toronto, à Hamilton ainsi qu'à Thunder Bay; et

« Attendu que la ville du Grand Sudbury est une plaque tournante pour la santé dans le nord-est, qui compte l'Hôpital régional de Sudbury et son programme régional de cancer, de même que l'École de médecine du Nord de l'Ontario;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'offrir de la TEP par le biais de l'Hôpital régional de Sudbury, donnant ainsi un accès équitable aux résidents du nord-est de l'Ontario. »

J'appuie cette pétition et je demanderai au page Yidu de l'amener.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Reza Moridi: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians with developmental disabilities deserve a system that is fair, simple and sustainable;

"Whereas the McGuinty government passed developmental services legislation and invested nearly half a billion dollars to strengthen and expand services;

"Whereas the McGuinty government is now helping over 16,000 people with developmental disabilities live in the community, close to their families and friends;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislature continue to support those with developmental disabilities and their families by supporting the government and its efforts and investments in transforming this sector to create a society where people with developmental disabilities are engaged and included in their communities."

I've signed this petition and I fully support it. I'll pass it on to page Emma.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Robert Bailey: I present this petition on behalf of the member from Cambridge.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

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"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

I agree with the petition, send it down with Caroline and sign my name as well.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I'm presenting this petition on behalf of 56 of my constituents in Wallaceburg and area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 80;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty $15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the $1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends,

"—increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I affix my name in full support.

REGISTERED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I present this petition on behalf of registered marriage and family therapists from around Ontario.

"Whereas the government's passing of the Psychotherapy Act, 2007 and the process in place to establish the new College of Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario is a great step in promoting and protecting the public when it accesses mental health services in the province; and

"Whereas the Ontario Association for Marriage and Family Therapy represents over 800 members and over 500 of whom are registered marriage and family therapists (RMFTs); and

"Whereas RMFTs have among the highest and most rigorous training standards of any mental health professional in Ontario, which includes a master's degree in marriage and family therapy or a related field; and

"Whereas family therapists are highly trained and uniquely qualified mental health professionals who work in hospitals, in family health teams, in family counselling agencies, in children's centres, in addictions agencies, in mental health agencies and in private practice; and

"Whereas the public needs to be able to easily distinguish and access the most appropriate specialist within the psychotherapy profession to meet their health care needs; and

"Whereas marriage and family therapy is a distinct mental health profession and has statutory recognition and title protection in all 50 US states and the province of Quebec; and

"Whereas specialty title recognition for registered marriage and family therapists (RMFTs) that formally recognizes this mental health service as a specialized distinct and separate profession within psychotherapy will assist the public in accessing the proper qualified mental health service provider to meet their specific needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That specialty title recognition for registered marriage and family therapists be established in Ontario."

I will affix my signature and give this to Luke.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed."

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Glen R. Murray: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas hundreds of individuals are in dire need of residential supports due to emergency and crisis situations;

"Whereas aging Ontarians who provide care for their loved ones in their family homes require support when they can no longer provide support themselves;

"Whereas the McGuinty government has supported the developmental services sector with unprecedented funding increases in past years, creating new spaces and client supports while strengthening agency base budgets and employee wages;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislature support those with developmental disabilities and their families by supporting the government's decision to provide $36 million in much-needed funding to care for those in emergency or crisis situations while not reducing transfers to agencies."

I'll affix my signature to it.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

I support this petition and I am pleased to give it to page Joshua.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Mr. Gerretsen, on behalf of Ms. Pupatello, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 68, Loi favorisant un Ontario propice aux affaires en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I will be sharing my time with the member from Mississauga South.

Interjections.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Thank you very much. May I continue?

I'm pleased to begin the second reading debate on our government's proposed Open for Business Act. As I mentioned before, I'll be sharing my time with the member from Mississauga South.

An important part of this legislation is that, if passed, it would ensure that the environment is rigorously protected while introducing a faster and more efficient approvals system. In fact, our aim is to enhance environmental protections as well as public transparency.

To accomplish both of these goals while also making Ontario a great place to do business, we simply need to modernize our approvals processes within the Ministry of the Environment. We need a smarter, faster, better system that reflects the environmental values of the 21st century and the way business is done in today's world.

Under the current process, the Ministry of the Environment receives more than 6,000 requests for certificates of approval each and every year. Every single one of those applications is subjected to exactly the same process, even though they do not all require the same level of review. A significant number of the applications we receive are for activities that pose a low risk to the environment and to human health.

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On top of that, the current system is a paper-based system that has been in effect for well over 30 years. We've sometimes received applications, quite frankly, that filled rooms with boxes and boxes of paper. It is clear that we need an updated system to reflect both the environmental and economic values of the 21st century.

Last September, we took the first step by eliminating a backlog of some 1,700 applications, some of which were outstanding for up to 18 months. Yet quite often, the

organizations that needed these certificates were operating during the time that the approval process was taking to actually approve those certificates, and that simply wasn't correct. Therefore, in March of this year, we launched the Ministry of the Environment's searchable electronic certificates of approval library. This online library enhances the transparency of the certificates of approval process and makes it easier for businesses to find and access past certificates of approval.

We've already received a very positive response from many and numerous stakeholders on this new electronic library. Now we want to move forward with a proposed new risk-based approach to environmental approvals. The proposed legislation, if passed, would allow for the creation of a searchable online registry for activities that pose a lower risk for the environment. This would allow us to focus our resources within the ministry and efforts on the approvals process for the high-risk activities that pose the greatest threat to the environment and to our public health. It would reduce paper and allow us to concentrate on environmental outcomes and further our goals in protecting the environment and human health. Our concerns within the Ministry of the Environment and within the government should always be about the environmental outcomes rather than the processes.

Our new approach would also increase public transparency by creating a searchable public website with detailed information on all the activities, both the high-risk as well as the low-risk ones, that are subject to approval or registration in Ontario. This web-based electronic system would make it easier for any member of the public to look up the details of any activity that might be taking place near their homes or businesses. This would make it faster and easier for Ontarians to get the information they need without having to resort to time-consuming and costly freedom-of-information requests, which is currently the case. It will also facilitate public oversight and appeals, helping us ensure compliance with our regulations.

Let me absolutely assure this House and everyone who may be listening or watching that all registered activities will continue to be subjected to a full range of compliance tools, including audits, field inspections and orders, in order to maintain and enhance the protection of the environment and public health. There's nothing in this bill that takes anything away from the strong protections with respect to the environment that we currently have in this province of Ontario. At the same time, the act would make it easier for businesses to work with government by introducing a more flexible and user-friendly approach that remains fully protective of our environment.

Under the current system, for example, a large manufacturing plant may require multiple approvals for emissions to air, land and water. This quite often leads to a complex process for both the manufacturer as well as the ministry. The new process that we are proposing would enable a single multi-media approval for the whole plant, covering all types of emissions. Not only would this be a more efficient way to process the application; it would also enable us to assess the plant in a holistic fashion. We would be better able to assess all of the combined impacts of the plant on the environment and on human health. It would allow us to look at the cumulative impact on the environment that those in the environmental community, quite frankly, have been advocating for years. Now, this is not something that is as easy with the current process, since it requires several different applications and approvals for a single plant.

The new process we are proposing would clearly enhance our ability to protect our environment. The new system would also introduce operational flexibility to allow the applicant to make certain changes to their facility without having to apply for an amendment to the approval. Again, environmental protection would, as always, be paramount here, and operational flexibility would only apply if the proposed changes were within certain previously defined bounds.

These proposed innovations to the approvals process are based on our best scientific knowledge. We are far more aware today than in previous generations about how certain industrial activities that are commonplace today will impact our environment, and we are better able to adjust our approvals process so that it's flexible while remaining fully protective of the environment.

On that note, I should add that the proposed act, if passed, would also enable us to level the playing field in terms of approvals. Under the current system, some older facilities are operating under earlier environmental approvals that, quite frankly, no longer meet our current standards.

We propose to deal with this by putting in place a periodic updating procedure requiring facilities to apply for regular reviews of their approvals. Once again, this simple step would enhance our environmental protections by ensuring that all facilities, even the older ones, are in line with the latest and best science on the issue.

This would be a modern and effective way of dealing with approvals, and it would put Ontario in line with the way the world is doing this right now. This risk-based approach is already up and running successfully in other jurisdictions, including New York state, the state of California and the United Kingdom. Here in Canada, it's being used in British Columbia and Saskatchewan will soon follow. We want to join these modern regulators at the forefront of environmental protection.

We have consulted widely on this proposal to modernize the approvals system. Earlier this year, we posted our approach on the Environmental Registry. Last winter, we began a series of round tables with experts from the business community and environmental organizations, and we are still getting positive and constructive feedback on the proposed legislation from them. We have also held focus meetings with smaller groups of non-governmental environmental organizations to ensure that environmental protection remains front and centre in all of our concerns.

Let me share with you today some of the feedback—some of the comments—we received during the consultation process.

Bob Oliver, executive director of Pollution Probe, said that his organization "supports Ontario's commitment to build a streamlined modern approvals system that is good for business while protecting the environment." He went on to say, "The proposed risk-based approach could help achieve this balance."

We've also had support from the Ontario Environment Industry Association, ONEIA, which held, as you may recall, its annual environment industry day here at Queen's Park within the last couple of weeks.

We've heard many positive reactions from others as well. Ian Howcroft, vice-president of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters of Ontario said, "We are very pleased with the introduction of today's legislation that will address many of the concerns and challenges that have long impeded businesses. We operate in a new economic normal and these reforms will ensure Ontario's open for business by removing outdated processes and unnecessary red tape. This is a big step forward for Ontario."

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Elyse Allan, who is the president and CEO of General Electric of Canada, said, "I applaud the government's move to reduce business costs by streamlining regulations and harmonizing them with other jurisdictions, where possible ... With regulatory simplification and recent changes in the tax structure, the Ontario government has taken important steps to make Ontario an attractive place for companies to invest and create jobs."

Adrianna Stech, manager of environment and sustainability for the Ontario Mining Association, has said, "To the mining community, the proposed framework for modernizing environmental approvals signifies a welcome move toward enhancing the business climate in the province on a par with other leading jurisdictions, while improving the efficiency and efficacy of environmental protection measures and ensuring worker health and safety."

As we work to implement this approach, we will continue to consult these and other stakeholders. We will invite further input from the round table groups and sectors and others, should Ontario develop regulations and implement the proposed changes. As a matter of fact, we've already set up an aboriginal technical working committee to discuss the proposed changes, and this committee met for the first time in April.

If the legislation is passed, we plan to gradually roll out the new requirements over the course of 2011 and 2012, so the system is not going to change overnight.

We know that Ontarians want a strong and competitive economy, but they also want a very strong environmental system in place. A healthy and clean environment is best for all of us. We, as a government, believe that and we honestly believe that we can have both. This is what our proposed new approvals process would achieve.

We've also heard from some in the environmental community and they have stated a number of concerns to us. I just want to address a couple of them. The environmental community wants to ensure that the environment will be protected as a result of these proposed measures, so let me assure you that this will be the case. Let me just give you a couple of reasons for that.

Issuing multimedia and site-wide approvals means we can better assess potential environmental impacts from an ecosystem perspective. As I mentioned before, it will give us the ability to start looking at the cumulative effect of the necessary approvals. That was not the case in the past.

The online registry will provide far greater transparency. Anyone in this province will be able to look up information about environmental approvals and registrations in their community without having to resort to a freedom-of-information request or process.

The new process would require existing facilities with approvals issued decades ago to come back to the ministry for review to ensure that the compliance meets today's much tougher stringent standards than standards that may have been in place 10 or 20 years ago.

The requirement for mandatory reviews could also be incorporated into the new approvals process. By using a risk-based approach, the ministry staff can actually focus their efforts on those proposals that are more complex and pose a greater risk to the environment. Today, each and every application is looked at in exactly the same light.

Through electronic submissions, we will be better able to look at applications in the broader context of their location and get a better understanding of the potential environmental impacts.

The other concern that has been raised by the environmental community deals with the whole concept of the registry. We've also heard from some of them that they are concerned about where exactly the line would be drawn between those proposals that will go on the regstry and those that would require an environmental compliance approval and what this means for public consultation.

We understand that where you draw that line between the so-called simple, low-risk processes and the high-risk processes is going to be a tough call and that's going to be the determining factor as to whether or not we're going to be successful.

Now, let me say once again, if this legislation is passed, we will be consulting extensively to develop the rules that would allow a proposed activity to be placed on the registry; this is not going to be done overnight. That would be done, ultimately, through regulation. Detailed information on activities on the registry and those obtaining an approval would be available and searchable on a public information website, as I stated before.

Should this bill pass and a registry be implemented, the process to address issues raised by the public for registered activities that are low-risk would include inquiries or complaints which would be made to the local district office, and our environmental officers would investigate any concerns. Any contraventions could mean a suspension from the registry. If the facility is in com-

pliance but there are some site-specific concerns, the activity could also be moved from the registry to the environmental compliance approval system.

Ministry oversight in environmental protection is and will remain paramount. The new system would be improved and modern and still maintain and enhance, wherever possible, the highest possible environmental protection.

I would urge all members of this House to stand up for the kind of future we envision for the province of Ontario, to bring this system that has been around for the last 30 or 40 years into the 21st century and support this bill, which is good for the environment and good for our economy.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Mississauga South.

Mr. Charles Sousa: I am pleased to rise in the Legislature this afternoon to join in the debate on Bill 68, the Open for Business Act. Since the McGuinty government came into office in 2003, we have demonstrated a commitment to working with the business community to address barriers to investment and growth. Our balanced approach to strengthening the economy has lowered business costs while we continue to invest in the things that matter most to Ontarians: health, education, poverty reduction and the environment—all of which give Ontario a competitive advantage.

As the economy continues to recover from the sharpest economic decline since the 1930s, we are continuing our work to make Ontario the best place to start and grow a business. The Open Ontario plan, introduced as part of our 2010 provincial budget, is designed to open the province to new ideas and new investment, and Bill 68, the Open for Business Act, supports our economic plan.

Make no mistake: In order to compete in the global economy, Ontario must be open for business. In order to secure the next generation of jobs for Ontario families, Ontario must be open for business. And in order to help Ontario small business to achieve their full potential, Ontario must be open for business.

As a director of the American Chamber of Commerce, as a member of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, I understand the challenges faced by business. The business community is tired of dealing with complicated government applications, poor coordination between the levels of government and lengthy times for approvals. Three words sum up the more than 100 amendments from 10 ministries within the Open for Business Act: simpler, better and faster. Bill 68 will make things simpler for business by improving approvals and modernizing services. The proposed legislation will make it better for business by harmonizing Ontario's legislation with our neighbouring jurisdictions and lightening the administrative burden. Through improving government business services, Bill 68 will help provide faster services and approvals to the business community.

We can continue to protect the public interest and provide adequate government oversight without creating unnecessary barriers to business. By making it simpler, better and faster for business to interact with government, all Ontarians will benefit in the form of increased investment and more jobs.

As a former business owner and as a banker to businesses, I appreciate first-hand the challenges imposed on small and medium-sized enterprise activities. As a member on the Small Business Agency of Ontario, the message given to me was loud and clear. The message was: In order for business to increase its competitiveness and improve its efficiencies, it requires governments to be more sensitive and responsive.

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I am proud to be part of a government that not only listens but has acted to implement sweeping changes that will enable greater opportunity for Ontario businesses. We call this change the Open for Business Act, and that's why, since the introduction of the bill, many prominent business associations have stepped in in support of the Open for Business Act. Ian Howcroft, the vice-president of CME for Ontario, supports Bill 68, saying the proposed legislation "will address many of the concerns and challenges that have long impeded businesses. We operate in a new economic normal and these reforms will ensure Ontario is open for business by removing outdated processes and unnecessary red tape. This is a big step forward for Ontario."

It's not just big business that is supportive. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has also praised the McGuinty government's efforts. Satinder Chera, CFIB's Ontario director, had this to say: "For too long, governments at all levels have been oblivious to the negative consequences of too much regulation on the job-creating small business sector. Today's announcement is another sign that Ontario is getting the message."

As a government, we recognize the importance of reducing the administrative burden on the small business community, and Bill 68 will deliver significant cost and time savings that will help entrepreneurs and small business owners to focus their efforts on growing their business and creating jobs for Ontario families. It's not just manufacturers that are supportive. Environmental groups have also been part of the consultation process and recognize the importance of moving to a modern, risk-based system.

Bob Oliver, executive director of Pollution Probe, had this to say: "Pollution Probe supports Ontario's commitment to build a streamlined modern approval system that is good for business while protecting the environment. The proposed risk-based approach could help achieve this balance. Pollution Probe looks forward to ongoing consultation on this process."

From these varied organizations, the message is clear: Ontario has listened and has acted. Our balanced approach and our thorough consultation process will bring cost and time savings to the business community, better protecting the environment by focusing our efforts on high-risk activities.

Let's take a closer look at just a few of the amendments in the Open for Business Act. The Employment

Standards Act has been frequently cited as a concern for business and is an area where Bill 68 will provide significant improvement. Among other things, the proposed changes would encourage employees and employers to settle disputes at an early stage, avoiding unnecessary costs for both parties and allowing employment standards officers to focus on the current backlog of claims. By eliminating the claims backlog, the Ministry of Labour can focus on public education and outreach and conduct more proactive inspections that would reach more workplaces.

Again, we have taken a balanced approach to growing the economy, and the proposed changes to the Employment Standards Act will deliver results for businesses, while providing fairness for workers.

The amendments to the Highway Traffic Act brought forward by the Ministry of Transportation will harmonize Ontario's requirements with the rest of the province in a range of areas, including: harmonizing vehicle-width exemptions with other provinces; phasing out the need for special permits relating to the length of recreational vehicles; and ensuring Ontario's vehicle-length regulations for full trailers meet obligations.

All of these changes have great potential for the business community. Let me explain quickly. Not having to apply for special permits, businesses will reduce their operating costs, and the harmonization of requirements with other provinces will enhance the movement of goods and people. This is good for Ontario's trucking and passenger industries and our economy. These changes would reduce the regulatory burden on businesses. It would also meet standards endorsed by the Council of Ministers of Transportation in support of the Ontario-Quebec trade and co-operation agreement. Furthermore, the proposed changes to the Dangerous Goods Transportation Act allow for the timely adoption of federal rules and would reflect the most current safety practices for transporting dangerous goods, a measure that will also reduce the duplication of efforts between the province and the federal government.

One set of rules makes it easier for businesses to comply and will continue to keep our roads among the safest in North America.

In addition to reducing the administrative burden on Ontario businesses, Bill 68 also supports a strong workforce. The Ministry of the Attorney General is proposing amendments to the Professional Engineers Act that will align definitions and licence requirements with interprovincial and international expectations and improve self-governance mechanisms. This includes the removal of unnecessary citizenship requirements for individuals who apply for a professional engineer's licence. These amendments have been proposed by the Professional Engineers Ontario council, the governing body of the profession, and will make the administration of the engineering profession in Ontario more efficient.

In addition to responding to specific changes requested by stakeholders, the Open for Business Act will also modernize many pieces of existing legislation. Take, for example, the proposed changes to the Construction Lien Act, also brought forward by the Ministry of the Attorney General. If passed, these would be the first substantive changes to the legislation in 20 years. The proposed changes to the Construction Lien Act would help ensure that courts are only involved in construction disputes when needed, by broadening the definition of the term "improvement."

It would clarify the lien process for condominiums and the right to cross-examine those who have registered liens.

It would protect the rights of claimants with sheltered liens, regardless of whether the original lien has been dealt with or resolved.

The Council of Ontario Construction Associations represents more than 10,000 construction businesses that employ more than 400,000 skilled tradespeople and has come out in support of these proposed amendments.

COCA president Ian Cunningham says: "The Open for Business Act is a significant victory for COCA and for Ontario's institutional, commercial, industrial and heavy civil construction industry, especially small businesses. COCA is very grateful to Attorney General Bentley and to Economic Development and Trade Minister Pupatello for making these changes a priority in the government's mandate."

All of the ministries that have brought forward amendments to be included in the Open for Business Act have taken great care to ensure that these changes will continue to protect consumers, workers and the environment. By creating a more focused regulatory environment and providing clearer rules, we can ensure stronger and more rigorous compliance while improving the relationship between government and business.

The days of government and business acting in isolation are over. We recognize that success in the global economy depends on the public and private sectors working together to address barriers to investment and growth. The Open for Business Act, Bill 68, delivers significant changes that will save Ontario businesses both time and money.

Let me say again: We will continue to protect the public interest and provide appropriate government oversight without creating unnecessary barriers to business. Securing our place as a leader in the global economy depends on Ontario being open for business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I appreciate the opportunity to respond on Bill 68, the Open for Business Act.

There were some aspects that I didn't hear any comments about and I would have liked to have heard about. He mentioned the environmental organizations who had strong support. However, there's one provision in there where the selling off of conservation lands no longer requires ministerial approval. One of the difficulties that may end up coming down the line is that it's not initially the primary sale; it's potentially secondary and third sales that come off those lands that will—and can—impact communities greatly.

I know that in the past there were a number of areas that we looked at where potentially those lands were being sought after by developers yet they wanted to be protected by communities. By eliminating the minister's ability to sign off on that, that may open it up to those lands being sold off for development as as opposed to what they were initially designed to do, which was to protect certain areas.

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He spoke about the MTO's jurisdictional consistency throughout a number of jurisdictions in basically the northeastern states. There are regulations or an ongoing standard that allows for those communities to maintain standards so that all the trucking industries and all the carrying industries essentially are there.

I'm not sure—I have not heard—how that will be different, other than that recreational vehicles are being allowed to tow and the dimensions on that. I know there was some concern regarding firefighters: the width of their trucks and allowances that need to be reviewed in that area. Hopefully, that will be brought in.

He spoke about dangerous goods and reporting. Having the privilege to sit on the public accounts committee, I know there were a number of suggestions that we made regarding dangerous goods and the transportation, regulation and reporting of them. The difficulty was that there was no consistency in the reporting to ensure the safety of those dangerous goods as they move through the system. I certainly hope that has been tightened up to make sure those dangerous goods are properly transported in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I listened intently to both spokespersons for the government, and I heard a lot of generalizations. I also heard a failure to deal with two or three rather serious specific issues.

In their background notes, the government says it wants to reform the Employment Standards Act because there is a backlog of complaints from workers about not being treated fairly by employers: workers who are not being paid vacation pay, workers who are not being paid overtime and workers who are not being paid—period. I would like to have seen something in the legislation to address that, but I didn't hear anything. When I look at the legislation, I must say I don't see anything that will address that. In fact, what I see is the opposite. Workers in a non-unionized situation are very precarious to start with. I think this legislation would make it even more precarious for them. I wanted to hear something from the government on that, and I didn't.

The other thing that I think we all need to recognize is that the government does intend here to rather substantially loosen up some of the environmental rules. I want to remind all members that the Bush administration thought it was a good idea to loosen up the environmental rules dealing with the oil industry to make it easier for them to drill: fewer regulations and less stringent regulations in terms of drilling for oil. They said it would promote energy security and jobs. Well, if I look at what is happening in the United States today, people are worried about the loss of jobs and really worried about the environmental impacts.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm very pleased to speak to this bill today. I think I would just like to mention, first of all, that we're not talking about loosening up environmental requirements but looking at taking on a new approach with ministry staff. I just had a couple of applications come in from an industry that is going to reduce greenhouse gases, is going to save on local pollution and is going to be very good for the environment.

But they have a long process. They have to get the design of their system in place. They have to start thinking of pre-ordering equipment, because there's a six- or nine-month ordering time for the special equipment they need. Then they want to make sure, when they have this investment of $2 million or $3 million on this process that's going to reduce trucking a great deal, that they can get it in place and have their investment working for them.

So I think it's more collaboration, and I'm really pleased about what I heard from the Minister of Transportation today. It's collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment to make sure they understand the economics of what a business has to do, what they have to go through and what they want in the end. They can't stand to have $3 million and $4 million sitting there for another six or eight months on a standard approval process. I think we work together. That is what we should do. What we're trying to do is make jobs for families. That's what it's in the interests of. So it's very easy, without lowering the standards whatsoever, to work collaboratively with industry who have good ideas to work for the benefit of creating jobs in our province of Ontario. I really commend the Minister of the Environment for what he said on this today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Open Ontario certainly sounds like a wonderful idea, and it would be a wonderful idea if in fact it was going to happen. The problem with this government is that it has a track record, and the track record would—

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: People with memories—and I'm sure the member from along the north channel up there in Manitoulin Island remembers very well when De Beers was opening their diamond mine, they invested almost a billion dollars—a billion dollars of investment. That is a lot of money. It's almost as much money as this government wasted on eHealth—a billion dollars.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Almost.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Almost. They invested that money into a diamond mine in northern Ontario, and they did that under the understanding that when they started mining diamonds, they would pay a royalty to the

province of Ontario for every carat of diamond they took out of the ground. Of course, they based the development of their mine on the royalties they would be paying. Lo and behold, about a week before the mine opens, the Premier of Ontario shows up and practically doubles the royalty that Ontario is charging to De Beers.

Now that shut down Ontario's mining sector because no one in the world trusts this government anymore. This government isn't trustworthy.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Order.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: In the world of mining, Ontario is known very much like a banana republic because you've destroyed Ontario's good word—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Stop the clock. Thank you.

The member from Halton will continue.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Apparently we've hit a nerve, Madam Speaker.

When you break your word and you allow people to develop things in Ontario and then change the rules at the last minute, you're not opening Ontario, you're closing Ontario. This government should be ashamed of themselves for what they've done to northern Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The Minister of the Environment has up to two minutes to respond.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I will deal with some of the issues as they relate to the modernization of the environmental approvals process.

I'll be the first to admit that everyone fears change. Whenever something changes in our life and we don't know exactly what's next, we fear the potential result. I can well understand how within the environmental community there may be some fear that this is a loosening of environmental standards. I can tell you that this is absolutely not the case. When you look at all of the environmental regulations that we have in place with respect to air, with respect to water, with respect to land, I think everyone would agree that they are a lot, lot tougher than they were 30 or 40 years ago when this particular process was first put into being.

We are now 40 years later. We are still doing everything in paper mode, and we're still looking at everything, from the certificate of approval process, in exactly the same way—whether we're dealing with a relatively small unit, for example, the expansion of a heating system in a building, to building a huge, modern plant with a lot of outputs in both air and water. That simply isn't right. We should be putting our resources where they are most required, and they are for the high-risk activities.

Other progressive jurisdictions have taken the move that we're taking in this bill. If you look at the United Kingdom, they approved this kind of an approach many years ago. California and New York state, which are two of the more progressive states in the US, have done this. British Columbia has done it.

It is time that we bring our processes and systems into the 21st century, that we start computerizing particularly those parts that are of low risk. That's exactly what this bill is about. It is not about lowering our environmental standards in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to see that after almost seven years in office, the McGuinty government has finally seen fit to introduce a red tape reduction act. Now, of course, they do not call it a red tape reduction act; they want to call it "Open for Business" because using the term "red tape" would lead people to ask why they have done nothing for almost two terms in office to cut red tape for businesses and citizens.

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We know that red tape and overregulation are huge problems for businesses and citizens in Ontario. Let's take a minute to distinguish between red tape and proper regulation. Important regulations include issues regarding health and safety. They're designed to increase consumer confidence. They set up a level playing field for legitimate business, because everyone understands that the rules apply equally to everyone else. Regulations of that nature are both necessary and helpful. They create a healthy business climate.

Red tape, on the other hand, means overlap; duplication; a burden on business and individuals that's time-consuming, that can be expensive, that you can't have billing time cover; and it has the effect of decreasing consumer confidence because people begin to cut corners. This is too much of a burden, and so they're looking for ways to reduce that burden on themselves. What is the effect? Well, it has the effect of stimulating the underground economy. That's the only part of the economy that grows when you have red tape.

In January, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the CFIB, highlighted the devastating effects of red tape on small businesses. As part of the first-ever red tape awareness week, the CFIB released the report Prosperity Restricted by Red Tape, revealing the annual cost associated with red tape in Canada to be an estimated $30 billion. In their January paper, the CFIB identified the burden of government regulation as a priority for business at 65%, second only to the total tax burden at 75%. Government members should remember this if they claim that the new sales tax will reduce the regulatory burden. The only item that worries small businesses more than overregulation is higher taxes. The aim should be to reduce both of them.

The CFIB stated in 2007 that this government makes no attempt to control red tape, either the size of the regulatory workload or the regulatory cost government imposes on small business. The CFIB said that additional regulation pours out uncontrollably from all levels of government. They also say that government regulation now far exceeds small business's capacity to cope and government's capacity to administer, communicate or enforce.

The CFIB's 2010 report provided some stark numbers about the costs of meeting government regulation on business owners: 73% reported it added significant stress to their lives; 62% said it takes significant time away from family and friends; 51% said they spent a significant amount of time on regulation outside normal working hours; 54% said it impeded their ability to compete with larger firms; and 63% said it significantly reduced their business productivity.

They report that the cost of regulation in 2008 dollars in Ontario alone was almost $11 billion. The study also asked small businesses what they would do if regulatory costs were reduced: 54% said they would invest in equipment or expansion; 46% said they would pay down debt; and 28% would hire more employees.

Some more of the highlights of the report include: Only Manitoba beat Ontario on a measure of whether or not CFIB members felt red tape had increased in their province over the previous three years. "There have been no commitments made by the McGuinty government on publicly measuring the burden of regulation," says the report on page 18. In their regulatory accountability progress report, the CFIB gives three thumbs down for Ontario for no publicly reported measure for red tape, no current measurement of red tape and no permanent or legislated commitment to report on red tape.

Let's take a look at the Liberal record on red tape. The 2003 Ontario Liberal Plan for Economic Growth said, "We will convert the Red Tape Commission to make it an agency specifically devoted to meeting the needs of small business." This House should know that the Liberals did no such thing. The McGuinty government abolished the commission in 2004, and the only thing they have done to fight red tape in the years since is to issue a press release in March 2009 claiming they would cut regulations by 25% over two years—that was last March. That was 14 months ago.

In the spring, they did nothing. In the summer, they did nothing. Through the fall and the winter, they did nothing. Now, finally, they're introducing a bill to fight red tape. After seven years, someone on the other side of the House has realized to some extent that red tape kills jobs and restricts prosperity.

It's not as if they didn't have examples of what they should do. If we want some examples of what can be done, we need only look to British Columbia. British Columbia is a prime example of a provincial government offering action, not just words. The BC government has removed more than 151,000 needless regulations since 2001, a reduction of over 42%. If each regulation was represented by a single sheet of paper, it would make a pile 54 feet high. BC is committed to maintaining a net zero increase in regulatory requirements. In fact, in 2001, the government promised to reduce regulation by one third. Through deregulation and regulatory reform efforts, they exceeded their target, reducing regulations by 42%.

This is how BC said they did it: first, by identifying a minister responsible for deregulation. The minister championed the initiative and reported to colleagues and to the public on government's progress.

Number 2: establishing a regulatory reform office responsible for leading the initiative. The office is located in the Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development.

Number 3: establishing a baseline measure by counting all regulatory requirements contained in provincial legislation and accompanying regulations and policies. This central database established a starting point so they could monitor their progress.

Number 4: reviewing existing legislation by developing and implementing three-year plans that laid out when each ministry would be reviewing existing regulation. Priority was given to regulation that affected economic competitiveness.

Number 5: controlling new regulation by creating a regulatory reform policy that sets out criteria that must be used to develop and assess new regulations. Ministers must certify that proposed legislation and regulations have been developed using the criteria and provide rationales for any deviations.

Setting targets and reporting on performance was number 6. Targets are set out in annual three-year service plans. The minister responsible for the initiative reports quarterly to cabinet on government's progress. These progress reports are also published.

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When British Columbia started in 2001, the province had 360,118 regulatory requirements. As of their progress report on October 31, 2009, BC was down to 207,209 regulatory requirements. In Ontario, I doubt the province even knows how many regulatory requirements it has. In BC, they know exactly how many, and how much they have reduced. Maybe the McGuinty government should consult some of their colleagues in the British Columbia Liberal government to see how it's done. I know that the BC Liberal government is full of small-c conservatives, but it also has a lot of real Liberals in it, although they are obviously not the same as Ontario Liberals. Their views on the importance of strong businesses are certainly worlds apart.

BC has also done a lot of work in the area of labour mobility. They signed a trade, investment and labour mobility agreement so that skilled workers regulated in both BC and Alberta can freely practise their occupations in both places without added regulatory requirements like material exams or training. It also streamlined business registration and reporting requirements so that businesses registering in one province will automatically be recognized by the other.

To see an excellent system to deal with new regulations, we must also look to Alberta. The Alberta government established a Regulatory Review Secretariat with clearly outlined principles: necessity, effectiveness, proportionality, transparency, accountability and consistency. The Regulatory Review Secretariat is an agency with real powers in the Alberta government. Every department must obtain a compliance statement from the

secretariat before they can pass any regulation. Obtaining a compliance statement is a prerequisite to filing a regulation. There is no reason Ontario couldn't have a regulatory review process of equal strength to determine if any proposed regulation is necessary and workable.

When the Progressive Conservative government was in office we had a Red Tape Commission, which advised the government on reducing regulations and making government work better for businesses and citizens. Before it was abolished by the Liberals, the commission worked by: reviewing and commenting on ministry policy, legislative and regulatory proposals before they proceed to cabinet; coordinating the regular introduction of the red tape reduction and government efficiency legislation; reviewing red tape reduction plans developed by ministries as part of their annual business plans; working as an advocate to assist small businesses, institutions and individuals with specific problems; undertaking special red tape reduction projects and consultations, including the Fewer Forms, Faster Service project and working with the Ministry of Finance's small business advisory committee to simplify tax administration in Ontario; and engaging in communications and outreach activities to meet with business and other community interests to discuss red tape problems and solutions.

The commission achieved results. The commission coordinated the passage of 15 red tape reduction and government efficiency acts. These acts helped to repeal over 80 outdated statutes and amend well over 200 other acts. In addition, the commission worked with the ministries and their agencies to remove over 2,000 outdated and unnecessary regulations. The commission also helped over 200 small business owner-operators, institutions and individuals with their specific red tape problems. The CFIB even recommended that the federal government establish a red tape commission similar to Ontario's Red Tape Commission: 75% of CFIB survey "respondents favour the federal government setting up a red tape commission, following the successful Ontario example."

In 2003, Prime Minister Paul Martin appointed Mr. Hugh MacDiarmid as the chair of the federal government's External Advisory Committee on Smart Regulation. The federal budget provided $4 million over two years to support this work. Think of it. Even the last federal Liberal government recognized the importance of fighting red tape, before the McGuinty government even took office.

The Ontario Liberals seem to be the last Liberals to wake up and realize how important red tape is as a problem. One of their first acts was to kill our Red Tape Commission. It was more important to them to eliminate a PC government initiative than to use it to help businesses create jobs.

Fighting red tape has become a priority for governments throughout the world. Many of them are our economic competitors, and they are acting.

If this government wants an example of quick action, they should look to the United Kingdom. On May 20, the new coalition government introduced its program for government. Liberal members should know that this program represents the views of British Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, their sister party in the UK.

Here are some of the points on what the new coalition wants to do when it comes to business and red tape.

"The government believes that business is the driver of economic growth and innovation, and that we need to take urgent action to boost enterprise, support green growth and build a new and more responsible economic model. We want to create a fairer and more balanced economy, where we are not so dependent on a narrow range of economic sectors, and where new businesses and economic opportunities are more evenly shared between regions and industries."

Then it gets down to specifics. Here are some of the proposals that could be relevant for Ontario:

"We will cut red tape by introducing a 'one-in, one-out' rule whereby no new regulation is brought in without other regulation being cut by a greater amount.

"We will end the culture of 'tick-box' regulation, and instead target inspections on high-risk organisations through co-regulation and improving professional standards.

"We will impose 'sunset clauses' on regulations and regulators to ensure that the need for each regulation is regularly reviewed....

"We will give the public the opportunity to challenge the worst regulations....

"We will make it easier for people to set up new enterprises by cutting the time it takes to start a new business. Our ambition is to make the UK one of the fastest countries in the world to start up a new business. We will reduce the number of forms needed to register a new business, and move towards a 'one-click' registration model."

Keep in mind that these are not just Conservative proposals; they are part of a coalition agreement between Tories and Liberal Democrats published on May 20, just nine days after the coalition took office.

Compare these nine days to the seven years the McGuinty government has dithered before it has taken action to fight red tape. I use these examples of what other governments are doing not just as examples of what the McGuinty government should be doing but also to point out that Ontario's economic competitors, whether they be in North America, Europe or anywhere else around the world, are fighting red tape and doing it better than Ontario has done since the time of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves.

Our party has told this government for years that red tape is a problem, and the Liberals have done nothing.

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The PC Party's 2007 election platform said that we would "reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses which create most of today's jobs." We also promised to "bring the successful British Columbia model of regulatory review to Ontario. It turns the usual government practice on its head: Instead of imposing regulation

and forcing business to adjust, we will require government to justify every new regulation created.

"Every ministry will have to show how much red tape it generates, having a rolling three-year plan to reduce that burden, and report publicly on its progress."

We also proposed to introduce "a 'smart' regulation system to measure the potential impact of new rules, track how they are affecting people and businesses, and report on how effectively they are working.

"Regulations that protect public health and safety, or that are working fairly, will always be preserved and enhanced as required.

"Rules that kill jobs or impose unfair burdens will be fixed. The public interest can be protected without killing jobs."

In 2008 my colleague Norm Miller, MPP for Parry Sound–Muskoka, introduced a private member's bill to fight red tape. Here is what his bill proposed:

"Upon introducing a government bill or moving second or third reading of a government bill, a minister is required to attach a statement to the bill confirming that the government has reasonably considered and has answered a number of questions relating to the reduction of the regulatory burden, if any, that the bill imposes on persons or bodies.

"If the answers to any of these questions are negative, the statement must confirm that the government is satisfied that the regulatory burden is not unjustified in the circumstances in the government's opinion.

"There is no requirement to consider and answer the question if the government is satisfied that the only effect of the bill is to increase fees by an annual rate that the treasury board has approved or to make changes that are not material in nature.

"The bill imposes similar requirements for the making of regulations, whether the regulations are made by cabinet or some other person or body.

"Within six months after the bill is enacted, the government is required to prepare a plan to review, within three years, all public acts and regulations from the viewpoint of the red tape reduction policy.

"The review is done by the minister responsible for each act being reviewed or the provision of an act under which a regulation being reviewed is made.

"The minister is required to prepare a report of a review and to submit it, as soon as it is ready, to cabinet and to table it in the assembly.

"The government is also required to prepare and table in the assembly progress reports of all reviews every six months during the review period."

Another Tory bill full of good ideas, and so of course the government did not allow it to go anywhere.

In 2009 our new leader, the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook, appointed me as our party's critic for red tape, and I introduced a resolution to fight red tape, debated last October 1. It went as follows:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government has failed to help Ontario small businesses by reducing the financial and time burden of government regulation; and therefore, the government should re-establish the Red Tape Commission, which it abolished; and, that the commission must publicly demonstrate that it has worked with small business leaders to reduce both the number of regulations and the time and expense required of Ontario's businesses and citizens in complying with government regulation."

After we debated my resolution, the government went further than they did with my colleague's bill. They defeated my motion, sending a clear message that red tape was not a priority and that they did not intend to take action.

Remember that my motion came months after the government promised to make their 25% cut in regulations, in March 2009, and dithered for months and months, doing nothing.

At the end of October last year, our leader and caucus announced our party's proposals for small business in our small business jobs plan. Fighting red tape was a key initiative in this plan. Our specific proposals included reinstating a Red Tape Commission that will eliminate the many unnecessary regulations that punish small businesses; implementing a moratorium on new regulations that will impact small business jobs until the Red Tape Commission is in place to reduce the overall regulatory burden; and other proposals to repeal the government's job-killing WSIB reforms in Bill 119—a one-year payroll tax holiday for small businesses, turning Ontario's three-to-one journeymen-to-apprentice ratio into a one-to-one ratio, suspending the McGuinty government's decision to place 100% of the cost burden for the blue box program on small businesses and fighting the HST.

In January of this year, Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus launched a new website inviting Ontario consumers and businesses to share their experience with Dalton McGuinty's most ridiculous regulations and burdensome red tape. I still encourage small businesses to visit tiredofredtape.ca. This website is a forum for people to share their experiences and frustrations with the McGuinty government's job-killing red tape.

The PC Party's commitment to fighting red tape is clear: We fought it when we were in government, and we have repeatedly and consistently spoken against red tape and its economic and social costs ever since. This bill contains many positive changes, but it comes too late to make a real difference. The McGuinty government should have started fighting red tape as soon as it entered office. Unfortunately, it has long believed that the only way to fight problems is to spend money. It does not understand that in many cases, for small businesses and entrepreneurs, government is not a solution; it is the cause of problems. Government needs to find ways to get out of the way, to let businessmen and businesswomen innovate, create jobs and build prosperity.

My colleagues will speak to some of our specific concerns about this bill. I am just disappointed that the Ontario Liberals have left the issue of red tape so late—seven years of inaction, when they could have done so much to help Ontario's businesses. Instead, today we are

a have-not province; we have had our economy shattered by job losses; we face increasing energy costs at an ever-increasing rate; we have the Premier talking about a knowledge economy, and at the same time Seneca College brings out a report on the failure rates of math students in our post-secondary institutions; we have tax burdens that continue to rise; we have the cost of doing business in this province increasing; and now the government claims that Ontario is open for business. Based on the last seven years, obviously, it has been anything but.

The minister refers in his remarks to committee hearings and the development of regulations. I think that the opposition's concern—amongst many, but two very important parts—is the speed with which this bill was introduced and following up so quickly to have today's remarks. The fact that the minister himself refers to the fact that this bill is overarching—I'm not sure that's the term he used, but certainly one that will require, then, significant work at the regulation level. People are always very concerned when they hear that the legislation is but a summary of what's to come, because regulations are not conducted in public in the same way that debate on legislation is. People have to be forewarned to be able to look, to try to become part of the consultation process of regulations. This is a very different animal than that which is brought forward in this environment, in this chamber as legislation.

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I think the important thing for all of us here is that while they are coming late to the party on the issue of the need to have a review of regulation in this province, as I outlined very briefly, there are a great many problems that the province faces today. So, open for business? Well, it seems to me that it's a bit late, when obviously it hasn't been for the last seven years.

The litmus test of this legislation, of course, will be in those regulations: Will they actually do what the government purports they shall?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I listened to my colleague in the Conservative Party. While I do not agree with much of what she has said philosophically, I think she has identified one of the problems that the McGuinty Liberals have.

It depends on which day of the week you are listening to the McGuinty Liberals. One day of the week they will be pronouncing that they're bringing in new environmental protections that are supposed to safeguard the environment and the quality of life of people in this part of Ontario or that part of Ontario. Usually, these occur with a photo op—the Premier or the Minister of the Environment; usually, there are some kids in the background, this sort of thing. The messaging from this government is that more environmental regulation is a good thing. But if you turn around and wait, a week later you get other legislation, this legislation, which says that if you streamline the regulations and you do away with some regulations and you change other regulations, that's a good thing and that's going to make life better for people.

I have to give my colleague from the Conservative Party credit for nailing this: It depends on which week you're listening to the McGuinty Liberals, because the message last week wasn't the same as the message this week. I guess they hope the Toronto Star is not going to point this out. But there is a contradiction between what the McGuinty Liberals say one week and what they say the next week.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes to provide some response to the questions, the issues that were being raised by the member opposite.

Let's understand that this particular piece of legislation, Bill 68, speaks to being open for business. This is looking at ways of doing things more efficiently, faster, speeding up processes where possible, doing them in a more efficient and smarter way, and doing them in a more streamlined fashion when government is dealing with business. Business has and will continue to ask of governments of all stripes, at all levels, if we can call it that, to find ways of doing business more effectively between government and business, and our government is no exception.

We are doing this, at this point, in this fashion, through a legislative framework, as opposed to a committee that might be struck or through some other process that one might want to use—stakeholder or round table sessions. We're doing it in the form of legislation to really focus on the fact that we are and intend to be open for business and to find ways with business to make their jobs easier.

This will speak to opportunities in multiple ministries, not the least of which is the Ministry of the Environment and their modernization of approvals. This is looking at saving considerable amounts for business when they do work with the government of Ontario. The Ministry of Labour's employment standards modernization strategy—so we have at least two ministries identifying early on opportunities for them to find efficiencies in working with business without sacrificing the need, as government, to regulate certain functions. We see what happens, we know what happens when governments abandon their responsibility of having regulatory oversight. We can see that in small examples—and in extreme examples in some cases. I won't speak specifically to those, but that may be raised at some point in time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I want to comment on the member for York–Simcoe's remarks with regard to this act. I find it passing strange that we would have in an omnibus bill—and this is another omnibus bill brought in by the government. I think there's an intent by the government to bring legislation forward in an omnibus bill in the hope that members of the opposition will find

some part of the omnibus bill so much to their disliking that they have to vote against it on second and third reading. Then the minister of the day can stand up and say, "You voted against all of the matters in the omnibus bill, all 11 acts," when in fact the opposition might find only one or two matters they were objecting to in the act.

I protest strongly this practice of the government to bring in another omnibus bill. I don't know how many—I think that they bring most of their legislation forward now through omnibus bills. When you add all of the acts in the omnibus bill and the number of closure motions that they have, they now outstrip the Harris and Eves governments in terms of the closure motions that this government has brought forward, something which they have protested on many, many occasions. Just add up the acts, add up your closure motions on all of the acts, and you're the prizewinners now. So don't talk to us about closure and closing this place down. You guys are the winners.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: There's a huge inconsistency developing here. Here is the party lecturing us on reducing red tape and bureaucracy and opposing the HST—$8.5 billion in costs, $500 million in reduced red tape administrative costs in tax processing, and I can't think of more friction being removed from the economy and from the cost of small businesses than a harmonized sales tax. I have yet to find a single serious commentator—a right, left or centre economist or columnist—who hasn't acknowledged that the job creation abilities of small businesses in Ontario are greatly enhanced by the removal of that friction. That just gives you one example of a politically courageous government in this province prepared to make tough decisions, and quite frankly one in Ottawa. I think it has been somewhat frustrating to my constituents, only 15% of whom voted Conservative in the last by-election in my constituency, an all-time low for that party, largely because most real small-c conservatives understand the importance of deregulating and debureacratizing the tax system. It's interesting because tough choices get talked about a lot, and this is the party that has made that a tougher choice.

It's also interesting to me that we have been going through the largest global recession and at the same time bringing in reforms, from the not-for-profit act right through to the Municipal Act, that across this province have made it easier and less expensive, not just for business but for non-profits and municipalities, to operate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from York–Simcoe has up to two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I certainly wish to thank the members for Kenora–Rainy River, Pickering–Scarborough East and Carleton–Mississippi Mills, as well as Toronto Centre.

I found very interesting the last speaker's method of hooking together red tape and the HST because I immediately thought about how the people who worked for PST got shifted to HST with their severance, even though they stayed in the same office—they merely changed their business cards. I wondered how many jobs that meant were lost in this HST process—obviously none.

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The other interesting thing about the HST, since that seems to be the point of red tape for the member for Toronto Centre, is the complexities that still remain in terms of the rebate program, so that the ratios of rebate that people received in the broader public sector still remain something of an issue. It's all taxpayer dollars and it's all going to taxpayer-funded things, but the rates range from about 78% to 92% of the rebate. So when the member talks about reduction in red tape, I think there are a lot of areas where real red tape could have been reduced on the HST.

But I understand now where the 60,000 jobs come from that the Premier has indicated would come: that's 30,000 in the public sector working out the details of how to administer the HST and 30,000 for the accountants and lawyers helping the private sector survive the HST.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Howard Hampton: On behalf of the New Democrats, I'm pleased to be able to take part in this debate because I think there are a number of things that need to be said about this government's scheme called Open Ontario. This part of it is called "Open for Business." I expect we'll see other Open Ontario schemes or sub-schemes in the next few months as well. I want to say a bit about the concept. I also want to say a bit about some of the history.

What this legislation essentially says, or what the government is going to market it as saying, is that this government believes that by streamlining regulations and streamlining the regulatory environment, this will be good for business, and business will create jobs.

The government wants to say that this a very modern approach; that this is something new; it has never been thought of before; this is really world-class stuff. Well, maybe I've been here too long, but I've seen this stuff at least three times in the last 23 years. In fact, this is not the first time that a Liberal government has promoted this stuff.

When I was first elected, from 1987 to 1990, some guy named David Peterson, who was then Premier of the province, went from one end of the province to the other talking about how he was going to modernize government. He was going to streamline regulations and modernize those regulations. This was going to create a world-class, leading-edge regulatory environment. It was going to result in the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs. And then the spring of 1990 hit and you could see jobs being destroyed in this province. Despite the Premier and the Liberal government's rhetoric, you could see jobs being destroyed in this province at a rate of tens of thousands a month—accelerated to hundreds of thousands a month.

So, is this a new concept? No, Speaker. I could probably pull out one of Premier Peterson's speeches from 22

or 23 years ago, and it would sound remarkably in place with the rhetoric I hear from the Liberal government today.

It's not just Liberals who spoke this rhetoric. I remember someone named Mike Harris, elected in 1995, who said over and over again that he was going to cut red tape. He was going to deregulate. He was going to reduce the number of regulations, and it was going to create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the province of Ontario.

Well, there was red tape-cutting. There was red tape-cutting on the environmental front, and we now have the reality of Walkerton, shutting down provincial government labs that tested quality of water, telling people, "You're free to go to a private lab and we're not going to check up on you and the quality of the private lab. In fact, we're not going to check up on much at all." We remember the disaster that happened there.

There was a lot of talk about some financial deregulation. In fact, across the border George Bush really jumped on that one. He was going to cut regulations and reduce red tape for the financial sector, and it was going to create hundreds of thousands of jobs. Well, I've heard the rhetoric. The reality there was, it didn't create hundreds of thousands of jobs—it did for a while. You could always get a pyramid scheme going, and create jobs for a while, but what happened there, with the reduction of red tape, the deregulation and the cut of regulations, has been a financial disaster, a financial disaster that we've witnessed for a few years now.

The eventual loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs here, millions of jobs in the United States and elsewhere, and a principal part of that, everyone acknowledges, was this obsession with, "Oh, we're going to streamline the regulations. We're going to cut the regulations, we're going to do away with the regulations, and we're going to modernize the regulations." Well, it didn't create hundreds of thousands of jobs. I think the evidence is everywhere. The debris is everywhere that a lot of jobs were lost.

Now we have the McGuinty Liberals; they're going to sing the same song. They changed the rhetoric a bit. They don't talk about cutting; they talk about streamlining, focusing, eliminating some regulations over here. But it's the same old song. It is the same old song. It is the same old record being played over again.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: You've got your eight-tracks out again, Howie.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I could give it to you on eight-track; I could give it to you on a CD. This is a song that has been played over and over again in different ways, many times, in the last 23 years.

Now, let me deal with the politics of this—the politics—because here's the politics: We're headed into a provincial election. The election campaign is, for all intents and purposes, really going to begin seriously one year from now. It will be one of these new-style election campaigns that go on for seven months and millions and millions of advertising is on television, radio and in the TTC, and just about everywhere else. The election campaign is going to start only 11 months from now.

Now, the problem that the McGuinty Liberals have is that we've lost hundreds of thousands of jobs in Ontario. What they're hoping and praying is that there is going to be a widespread economic recovery, especially in the United States, which will bring back some of those jobs. But what they want to be able to do is, they want to be able to create something over here to be able to say, "Ah, it was our Open for Business scheme that did this. It was our Open for Business scheme that created all these jobs and made life wonderful for people." But, really, it's the hoping and praying that something magical is going to happen in the United States, something magical that will re-create those jobs. But then the McGuinty Liberals want to be able to say, "Ah, but it was Open for Business; that's what created all these jobs and made things good." That's the politics.

Most of this is lacking in substance; most of this is political appearance, or hoped-for political appearance. But there are some things in this bill that people across Ontario should pay particular attention to. There are sections of it that people should look at very carefully because it has the potential to do a lot of damage. I want to zero in on some of these things because I think there should be a serious discussion about them—

Mr. Glen R. Murray: The NDP plan for recovery.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Toronto Centre.

Mr. Howard Hampton: There should be really serious discussion about some of these issues.

The first one I wanted to zero in on is the Employment Standards Act. One of the realities of a modern economy is that there are a lot of people who have lost their jobs. There are a lot of people who have lost their pensions. There are a lot of people who have lost their homes. There are a lot of people whose incomes are much reduced now, compared to just a few years ago. There are a whole bunch of people who are really struggling, really having a very hard time. There are people who are owed literally tens of thousands of dollars in wages. There are people who are owed severance pay. There are people who are owed termination pay. There are people who cannot collect on their vacation pay. There are people who cannot retire even though they contributed to a pension plan for many years.

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Many of these people go to the employment standards branch of the Ministry of Labour and they say, "I worked, I worked overtime, I worked these many months, and the employer won't pay me. What am I going to do? I contributed literally for years and years to the pension plan, and now the employer says, 'Oh, do you know what? I didn't really fully fund the pension plan. I'm sorry, you're out of luck.'" Across this province there are literally hundreds of thousands of people in that situation.

The government says that this is going to help the situation. The McGuinty Liberals say that what's in this legislation is going to help that situation. I look at the legislation for something that's going to help address that economic and social injustice that we see in so many

communities across this province. I'm looking and I'm looking; I'm looking at the sections dealing with the Employment Standards Act.

Do you know what the government says is going to help? Do you know what the McGuinty Liberals say is going to help people? It says that if you have mediation or a meeting between that worker who hasn't been paid and the employer who refuses to pay or says, "I can't pay," that if you have a meeting or mediation before anything goes to the employment standards branch of the Ministry of Labour, that that's somehow going to help things.

Lord, what planet are these Liberals on? I have people come into my constituency offices all the time. Sometimes when I go home on a Thursday or a Friday or a Saturday or a Sunday, I'll have a succession of 10 or 15 people come in the office, and their complaints are under the Employment Standards Act. Many of them are young people; they're working, they put in their hours, then they're told, "Sorry. Your job is done."

They say, "I'm owed for 40 hours of work. I'm owed my vacation pay."

"Sorry, we're not paying you."

They've already talked to their employer. They've already said to their employer, "You haven't paid me. You're supposed to pay me. You are legally required to pay me." What good does it do for this McGuinty Liberal government to say to those workers, "You have to go back to that employer again. You have to see if you can work out some sort of mediated settlement"?

In these kinds of situations, that employer has all the cards. That employer has the money. He or she has already had the benefit of the worker's work. What possible good is it to send a worker back to try to seek some kind of mediated settlement with the employer when the employer has already said, "I'm not going to pay you. I'm not going to pay you what you are entitled to"?

This is not going to make things better for people who are already finding that the Employment Standards Act is not helping them, is not answering their problem, is not responding to the fact that they're owed money and are not being paid. This is not going to do anything for them. If anything, it's going to put them in a more vulnerable position. Many of the people who are employment standards applicants are people who feel they're owed overtime, but they didn't get overtime on the cheque. If they go directly to the employer and say, "You know, I'm owed this overtime," rather than going to the employment standards branch, what they face is the potential for immediate and very nasty repercussions from an employer who is already abusing them, already taking advantage of them. But more than that, from a government that says it is here to help people, this looks like abandonment. This looks like, "You're on your own. Look after yourself. And the fact that you may not have any money, the fact that you can't afford a lawyer, the fact that you've got no one who is prepared to act for you: too bad, so sad." You're on your own more than ever before.

I don't call that regulatory modernization; I don't call that regulatory streamlining. I call it literally saying to some of the most vulnerable workers in our society, "You don't count; you don't matter. Just shuffle on out of here and forget about filing an employment standards claim and having any sort of effective performance or any sort of effective amelioration of your situation."

If the McGuinty Liberals think this is going to pass muster, that this is going to work out there, good luck to you. I can tell you that the hundreds of thousands of people who feel aggrieved about not being paid, who are aggrieved about not getting severance pay and not getting termination pay, and who have paid into pension plans for all these years and now are told, "Sorry, you are high and dry"—I don't think they're going to swallow this. And they shouldn't swallow this.

This part of this bill is awful. It should be withdrawn and thrown in the junk heap, because it really does abandon some of the most vulnerable workers in our society. It doesn't matter what kind of rhetoric, what kind of photo ops you use, I don't think you're going to be able to escape that reality.

One of the other areas that I think the public needs to look at, and needs to look at carefully, are the sections dealing with the environmental protection. This government wants to say that streamlining and doing away with some of the environmental regulatory requirements is going to be a good thing. Again, I just want to cite some recent history. We're all watching the environmental disaster unfold in the Gulf of Mexico; we're all watching that. But I'd like to remind people of what went on before that environmental disaster unfolded.

What went on is this: In the United States, in terms of environmental regulation of the oil and gas sector, there was a lot of so-called regulatory streamlining, regulatory modernization that happened just a few years ago. Yes, this happened under the Bush government; it was very clear. And it's also very clear that in the time the Obama administration has been there, they haven't done much about it.

There were all kinds of regulatory modernizing and regulatory streamlining happening on the environmental front in respect to the oil and gas industry in the United States. The way it was sold was very much the language that's being used here. It was sold that these are big companies, they know what they're doing, they have an environmental track record, they have expertise, and they would never do something like this because it would really affect their branding and markets. So people were told, "We're safe to engage in this regulatory modernizing, regulatory streamlining as it effects the environmental regulation of the oil and gas industry."

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What happened? In this particular case, it's becoming clear what happened. British Petroleum started drilling their wells. Many of the guidelines—and that's what happened; regulations were replaced with guidelines—that were supposed to be followed, we now know, were not followed. They simply weren't followed. Things that

should have been done to a certain standard were not done to that standard. In fact, one of the people who worked on the drill rig said that shortcuts were being taken all the time because there wasn't effective regulation; there were guidelines, and as long as the company stayed within those guidelines, everything was fine. But we now know that people who—the survivors, because let's not forget that 11 people died and many more were injured. Some of the survivors said that shortcuts were being taken all the time. Why? Because it cost less—make more money and make more profit by taking the shortcut on many of the guidelines. And now you have one the greatest environmental disasters ever.

I'm not going to go into great detail on the environmental front. My colleague from Toronto–Danforth, Peter Tabuns, is going to do that. As a former executive director of Greenpeace, he has the professional credentials to go into this chapter and verse. But I just say to people across Ontario that what this McGuinty Liberal government is now promising in terms of environmental regulation—"Oh, we're going to streamline some of these environmental regulations. We're going to modernize some of these environmental regulations. And companies that have done thus and so over here—we'll just exempt them, or we'll lower the standard for them in terms of what they do on other sites." This sounds remarkably like what went on in the United States in terms of oil and gas regulation over the last eight years. The evidence of what happened there is growing clearer every day.

You have to be very, very careful when you start eliminating environmental protection regulations, particularly when you have industries that feel they can make a lot of money if they just run a little short on this guideline and a little short on that guideline, and maybe finesse a few things over here and finesse a few things over there. What has become apparent is that British Petroleum was doing a lot of finessing of the environmental guidelines, and now there's a multi-billion-dollar environmental and economic disaster that may have huge repercussions, not only for things like the marine environment and for all kinds of people who were engaged in working in fishing and gathering and the tourism sector, but it may have some very negative repercussions for the oil and gas sector as well.

I invite people to look at what the McGuinty Liberals are promoting here and compare it with what was being promoted in terms of regulatory streamlining, regulatory modernization in the United States as it pertains to the oil and gas industry and the unfolding disaster there.

Because we have other members who want to speak on particular sections of this bill, I'm not going to delve into those at great length at this time. But I would say that just on those two fronts alone, environmental protections and the Employment Standards Act, we're not seeing modernization; we're not seeing a better regulatory approach. On the employment standards side of things, I think we're seeing some of the most vulnerable workers in this province put in a more precarious situation than ever—some of the most vulnerable workers in this province, in effect, being abandoned. In terms of environmental rules and regulations, the language sounds oh, so similar to the language of the Bush government in the United States when it modernized and streamlined environmental regulation as it pertained to the oil sector there, and I think people need to look at that.

I said earlier, and New Democrats are fairly consistent in this, that I don't think that this legislation is going to create this brave, new wonderful world and I don't think it's going to create hundreds of thousands of jobs. That's the government's rhetoric. As I said, they're going to hope and pray that something happens in the United States, that hundreds of thousands of jobs are created, and then they'll try to claim credit. But despite the rhetoric, there's not the substance here to address the problems. So I want to deal with some of that substance now: what should be done, what needs to be done if this government were serious about creating jobs and serious about especially addressing the needs of small business.

It's pretty clear what's going on with small business. If you're a small business today—and by a small business, I don't mean somebody who's got a 200-person factory. I'm talking about people who are trying to start out, many people who are trying to create their own job because the job they had is gone. The problem small business is having is that small businesses can't get credit. They can't. They just cannot get credit. You've got all kinds of people—and I'm sure this happens in your constituency office as it happens in mine. I get people virtually every week coming in and saying, "I've got this great idea. This is something that I think would be useful. This is something we need to do. I've been to this bank. I've been to that bank. I've been to different lending institutions. I can't get any financial capital. I can't get any small business credit that will allow me to get started." The big banks don't lend to small businesses anymore. They don't. In my part of the world, if you're a small business and you're looking for credit to start up your business, overwhelmingly people have to go to the local credit union. The local credit union, which is concerned about small business in the community and wants to grow the local community, will lend some money. But forget about going to the big banks.

This is a real problem. It's a real problem that's been identified not just here, but today in the Financial Post, on page 7: "Obama urges US Congress to Act on Lending Plans for Small Business." Obama is "calling on Congress to approve a US$30-billion program to use bailout money repaid by big banks to help community banks make loans to small businesses."

Small business simply cannot get credit. I look in this legislation and I say to myself, "Is there anything in this legislation that's going to help small businesses get credit?" None, nothing.

It's not just the Obama administration that says it's a question of not being able to get credit. The front page headline in the Financial Post: "Bankers Hurt as Deals Dry Up"—a lack of liquidity in the credit market.

The Globe and Mail business section today is talking about the same thing: Small businesses, medium-sized businesses simply cannot get credit—no credit liquidity.

Again, I look at this legislation and I say to myself, "Is there something here that's going to create better credit conditions for small businesses?" I remember there was at one time a small business loan strategy. It was very small. Businesses starting out could get access to I think it was $15,000 or $20,000 in initial credit in this province. It was the sort of start-up thing that a lot of small businesses needed just to make the first baby step: to get a phone number, to get themselves set up as a limited partnership, to get their business licence and start doing whatever they wanted to do. Is there something in this legislation that's going to do that? No; nothing.

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I'm saying to myself, Well, wait a minute, what gives here? The government says that this legislation is going to create hundreds of thousands of jobs; it's going to make a difference. One of the biggest engines of creating jobs in our province is small business, and there's nothing here to deal with the central problem that small businesses identify across the province, nothing here to deal with the difficulty in accessing credit, nothing to deal with the problem of credit liquidity. What gives? I think it's just more evidence that this legislation is more about appearance and less about reality.

I want to deal with another area. The government, as part of its environmental deregulation strategy, is going to do away with a number of regulations in the forest sector under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and the Public Lands Act. I guess, again, it feels that these are going to create jobs. But in my part of the province, there used to be dozens of forest companies—dozens of them. Over the last five years, many of them have come to see me. Some of them who have come to see me are still in business; some who have come to see me are out of business. I haven't heard one of them say that they've got a problem with the Crown Forest Sustainability Act—I haven't heard one of them say that. I haven't heard one of them come and say, "I've got a problem with the Public Lands Act." Do you know what they've said? Especially if they're on the pulp and paper side of things, they said, "Our hydro bill has doubled. It has doubled in the last five years. That's what's putting us out of business."

So when the paper mill closed in Kenora, they were very clear. They said, "We can't continue to produce. The mills that we're competing against have hydro bills that are half of ours, and our hydro bill is 30% to 40% of our cost." When the Cascades mill closed in Thunder Bay, they didn't go around saying, "The problem is the Crown Forest Sustainability Act" or "The problem is the Public Lands Act." They were very clear; they said, "This government's policy of driving industrial hydro rates through the roof has caused our energy bill to double in the last three or four years, and we can no longer compete against mills in other jurisdictions that pay a lot less." When the Abitibi Mission mill went out of business, they said the same thing. When Bowater shut down a couple of their paper machines in Thunder Bay, they said the same thing—and the list goes on.

I look at this and I say, "Is there something here to address this problem? Is there something here that's going to address that problem?" Nothing. I say, "Well, what gives here? This government says that it's addressing some of the needs that have been identified by industry in this province." I can tell you, Speaker, I have not had one forest company come in and say, "Hey, it's the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that's putting us out of business. It's the Public Lands Act that's putting us out of business"—no. What's putting them out of business is they can't afford to pay their hydro bill. That is happening not just now in the forest sector. The Premier met with Xstrata from Timmins, and Xstrata was very plain, very clear. They said, "Look, we are the major, we are the largest consumer of electricity in the province because our smelting and processing facility in Timmins runs on electricity. We are the single largest industrial user of electricity in the province. Our hydro bill is in the range of tens of millions of dollars a month." They said, "We're leaving the province. We're going to continue to mine the ore in Ontario, but we're going to ship the ore 70 or 80 kilometres across the border to Quebec and all of the smelting and refining and processing of the ore will happen there, and 2,500 jobs will go."

But it wasn't just Xstrata. A few years ago, when Inco shut down their copper refinery in Sudbury, the same thing: They shut down their copper refinery, about 150 direct jobs, probably another 150 associated jobs gone. Inco was very clear. They said, "The cost of doing the smelting and refining and processing in Ontario is too high. We're going to take the ore out of the ground in Sudbury and we're going to ship it to a refinery, a smelter in Montreal, and do it there."

These are two industries, the forest sector and mine processing. Again, none of them have come to me and said, "Hey, it's the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that's killing jobs," or, "It's the Public Lands Act that's killing jobs and pushing us out." They didn't say that. They said, "We cannot afford to continue to operate these facilities when it's the policy of the McGuinty Liberal government to drive the industrial hydro rate in Ontario through the roof. We will save tens of millions of dollars a month by moving the smelting, the refining and the processing of the ore out of Ontario"—and by moving thousands of jobs out of Ontario to boot. Is there anything in this Open Ontario that's going to address that? Nothing—absolutely nothing.

Again, this is a demonstration that this bill isn't about substance. It's not about addressing the issues of small business and their difficulty in getting credit. It's not about the business of addressing the issues of large industrial companies who have historically done processing of the raw resources here in Ontario. It's not about addressing their needs at all. It's like they don't even exist. Let me tell you, the changes to the Crown

Forest Sustainability Act and the Public Lands Act are not going to do one thing to address the needs of those large industrial employers.

I can tell you what's happening. The pulp mill in my hometown is running full blast. The Abitibi pulp mill in Thunder Bay is running full blast. The Domtar pulp mill in Dryden is running full blast. What those companies are doing is, they take the wood fibre now, they semi-process it into pulp, and they ship the pulp now to their mills in Quebec or in the United States where the industrial hydro rates are a lot lower, and the paper is being made there. The good jobs—the electrician jobs, the machinist jobs, the millwright jobs, the instrument mechanic jobs, the computer-aided technology jobs—are going with them. The companies are very open about this. Go to Domtar's website. Domtar is very clear. They run essentially two pulp mills in Ontario now. They process the pulp. They ship it to their mills in Quebec and United States and they make paper there. Abitibi is doing the same thing, the exact same thing. Is there anything that's going to address that in this bill? Nothing—nothing whatsoever.

I also want to raise some of the issues that other businesses have brought to my attention. You know, Speaker, in my part of the province tourism is a big, big industry. Typically in my hometown, during the course of the summer, you'll see close to a million Americans lined up at the border who come over from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa. They're all coming across the border to go fishing and to go hunting. They recognize that in our part of northern Ontario we have an abundance of these things.

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But I can tell you, I talk with tourist resort operators, and they're very worried. They will typically sell seven days at a fishing camp, seven days at a hunting camp, and it's not unusual that people will pay US$2,000 for that opportunity—so roughly C$2,300, $2,400 at the current rate of exchange. They're not in the market all by themselves, though. You've got tourist resorts in Manitoba, you've got tourist resorts in northern Minnesota that they compete with. I can tell you what those small businesses are saying to me, all those tourist operators. They're saying to me, "I see what the HST is going do to my bill. I'm not going to be charging $2,400 anymore. I'm not going to be charging $2,000 for my week. My bill is going to be a couple of hundred dollars, $300 a week more than that. Meanwhile, the tourist camps that I'm competing against in Manitoba, the tourist camps that I'm competing against in Minnesota are not going to charge that." They're very clear. They say, "Look, I'm going to lose customers. I am not going to have customers pay an extra $300 a week to stay at my tourist resort when they can save $300 a week by going to one in Manitoba or by going to one in Minnesota." They're just very clear.

Many of them have been to the sports shows in Chicago, they've been to the sports shows in Minneapolis, they've been to the sports shows in St. Louis, they've been to the sports shows in Milwaukee, and people are already telling them, "I'm not going to pay an extra $300 in taxes to come to your tourist resort." Is there anything in this bill that's going to address that? Nothing. This a very serious concern for literally thousands of small businesses across this province, and yet there's nothing in this bill that's going to address that.

As we know, the government in their throne speech talked about the Ring of Fire. There was, I think, one paragraph about the Ring of Fire and mining in northern Ontario. So I'm looking at this bill and I'm trying to decide here what there is in this bill that is going to address some of those concerns. Because mining companies have some real concerns. They do. They tell us that northern Ontario, specifically north of the 51st parallel, has probably now got the greatest mining potential in the world. It's no longer the Congo River basin, the Amazon River basin or some deserted island in the Pacific or Indian Ocean. The place which probably has the greatest mining potential in the world is now northern Ontario, north of the 51st parallel. So companies are quite interested in that. But the same companies will say in one breath, "This is where the potential is," and they'll say in the next breath, "But, man, is it ever difficult—is it ever, ever difficult—to try to start an operation."

I hear some people try to blame First Nations. There's been some rhetoric about, "Well, it's the First Nations to blame." The companies themselves don't say that. The companies are very clear. They say, "Look, if you're serious about mining in this part of northern Ontario, you have to put in place legislation which recognizes the rights and interests of First Nations, and provide us and First Nations with some certainty as to what the rules are going to be. And you need to work co-operatively with those First Nations to do that." The same companies are saying that that environment doesn't exist in Ontario at this time. It doesn't exist.

I was at a chiefs' meeting last week here in Toronto. These are chiefs from the Treaty 3, Treaty 5 and Treaty 9 First Nations. Grand Chief Stan Beardy and Grand Chief Diane Kelly were both there. Chief Beardy extended his hand of diplomacy and wrote to the Premier, the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of the Environment, the aboriginal affairs minister and the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry and said, "Please do not proceed with second reading of the Far North Act. Do not proceed. Please put it aside. There are more important issues that need to be worked out before you proceed with that legislation. From the First Nation perspective, this legislation has many flaws and there are things in it which individual First Nations in the Far North find, frankly, insulting." He was trying to extend the hand of diplomacy. What did he get? He basically got a "We're not interested in your view" response from the government. Did the government put the Far North Act on the side and deal with the discussions and the consultations and the negotiations with those First Nations that First Nations were asking for? No. The government

is proceeding to slam this legislation not just through second reading but through committee hearings, and time allocate it even through third reading.

Does this government actually think this is going to help? Does this government actually think it's going to do something for the mining industry when it does that? Let me tell you, nothing could be further from reality. This is creating a whole new level of distrust and a whole new level of anxiety amongst First Nations. Knowing that, I looked at this legislation and I said, "This government says that this is going to create jobs and is going to provide a better quality of life. Is there anything in here that's going to address those issues, which both the mining industry and First Nations want to have addressed?" First Nations are not philosophically opposed to mining—they're not. They're quite interested, but they want to know what the ground rules are going to be, and they want an equal role in establishing those ground rules; they want an equal role in establishing the legislation; they want an equal role in setting out what the environmental protections are going to be, how they're going to be met and how they're going to be enforced; and they want an equal role when it comes to the division of revenue.

That's a very important industry. In the government's own throne speech they said that this is the key to the northern economy. Yet I look at this legislation, this so-called open for business legislation, and I look for something, anything, that would address those important issues raised by First Nations and raised by the mining industry, and there's nothing—nothing.

These are the things, if this government were really serious about creating jobs, putting people back to work, seeing some small businesses established, maintaining some employers who have historically been the heart and soul of many communities in Ontario, and creating the kind of regulatory environment that the mining industry needs and that First Nations need, that need to be addressed, but they're totally absent from this bill—totally absent.

What are we left with? Back to where we started: This bill is not so much about doing something of meaningful, substantive change to create jobs in the province; it's not about that at all. This is about creating some appearance. This is about trying to create a political concept that has no reality to it.

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However, as I pointed out earlier, some real damage can be done to vulnerable workers in this province because of what this government proposes to do to the Employment Standards Act. And some real damage can be done to environmental protection in this province, because what this government is talking about, in terms of modernizing and streamlining environmental regulations, sounds oh, so similar to what George Bush had in mind for streamlining and modernizing environmental regulations as they pertain to the oil and gas sector in the United States.

As we watch the disaster unfold in the Gulf of Mexico with literally billions of gallons of oil now being spilled into the ocean, upsetting fisheries, lobster habitat and much of the ocean habitat of Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida, I think people need to take a careful look at this.

If I were the government, I would take this bill back. I would look at the sections that weaken the Employment Standards Act; I would look at the sections that I think will seriously weaken environmental protection in this province; and I would also look at putting in some things that really deal with the real problems of small business, the real problems of industrial processors and manufacturers in this province, and the real issues that confront the mining industry and First Nations together. Then you'd have legislation that in fact has something to do with creating jobs and addressing the problems that have really been identified out there by people who are trying to create jobs in the province, by people who are trying to start small businesses, by people who are trying to sustain jobs and economic activity, and are having a very tough time doing it. I think the government would be wise to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Charles Sousa: Since the global recession struck, times have been difficult for many Ontario families, especially in the manufacturing sector. The last two years have been particularly hard. That's why our government is responding to the extraordinary challenge of the global recession. Some say it's not enough; some say it's too much.

Open for Business is the Ontario government's initiative to create faster, smarter and streamlined government-to-business services and regulations that make Ontario more attractive for business development while protecting the public interest.

It's our duty to stimulate economic activity and business while protecting workers and our environment. That's why we intend to create more open and responsive ways for government to work with business. That's why we're going to reduce the regulatory burden on Ontario by 25% by 2011 and build a foundation for improving services to business that protects the public interest, fosters business competitiveness and welcomes new business to the province. That's why we're going to adopt the federal business number as a single account number for dealing with businesses, replacing the multiple identifiers currently used, starting with the Ministries of Labour and Revenue, with other programs to be added over time. We want to develop and implement a new risk- and performance-based environmental permitting and approval system that will transform the environmental approval program.

We are not going to stick our heads in the sand and hope somehow for a recovery that is going to develop elsewhere. We are going to act, and we're going to act to make positive change here in Ontario. We're going to make progress by meeting with our stakeholders in order to achieve the target of reducing the regulatory burden by 25%. The recently passed Good Government Act reduces the burden already by increasing transparency, account-

ability and effectiveness in the province's laws, regulations and other systems.

All these measures are a direct response to businesses—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member from Oshawa.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I did listen to Mr. Hampton's speech earlier. He hit on some very key points when he spoke about competing energy rates, the difficulties that have taken place for the forestry and mining sectors, and the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and the impact it is having on the forestry sector in the north.

Some of the aspects of the bill that I think need to be brought up are about the closure of roads or access to roads. Access in northern Ontario is very key. The change coming forward removes the wording of forest access roads, eliminating that part from what we're seeing, and the concern now is that they can decide which roads will be closed in the north, whether it's camp roads or cottage roads as listed in southern Ontario, and the impact that's going to have for access for a great number of individuals throughout Ontario.

It's an ongoing debate from the tourist outfitters that the member from Kenora–Rainy River mentioned: the impact on the tourism industry and the number of people who cross there. It's an ongoing issue where residents want to make sure they have continued access, whereas a lot of outfitters are concerned that when they open up these areas and allow access to these remote camps that they've been providing service for, it will have a substantial impact.

I think we need to make sure that there is notification and that there are options to maintain these roads and facilities. In the past, I know that the Ministry of Natural Resources tried to close a number of these roads without notification. What was taking place was that there was a notification posted and then there was an opportunity to maintain these roads for insurance and a standard level to allow access to continue for that. I'm not seeing that that option is coming forward now, and I have some strong concerns. Hopefully the government will be able to address that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: You know, it's kind of difficult: I was teasing the member from Kenora–Rainy River that sometimes being in government during a global recession cannot be a lot of fun, and you would think the member, having been a member of a government in the last major recession that hit this province—the less severe one that was a made-in-Ontario recession as opposed to a global recession—would have a little more empathy.

When you hold us to the standard of perfect, that becomes the enemy of good. Here we are in a global recession, with Ontario leading North America with 3.8% GDP growth. A report that is coming out today was speculated in the paper to be even better than that. The auto sector is recovering at a faster rate than anywhere else in North America: 11% growth in the first quarter of this year and accelerating, and second and third shifts being put back in Oshawa. You know, the whining is amazing. We're now hearing from the Conservatives about highways; we're building a highway to Sudbury right now that the people there have been promised for generations, that they're seeing. It's one of the largest infrastructure projects going on right now in this province.

The HST, aggregating, integrating and getting rid of a double tax system, will create 600,000 jobs; this has become a standing joke for my friends in the NDP. Well, in the last 60 days—not weeks, not months, but 60 days—50,000 jobs have been created. At that rate, I don't think—

Interjection.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: According to the Globe and Mail, according to the National Post, according to the University of Toronto and according to the University of Calgary. At the rate of 25,000 jobs a month, that would do it in two years, not the six years we said.

Interjection.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: No, I don't think it's going to happen.

Some 50,000 jobs—and what did we get under the NDP? Some 1,000 jobs lost during a day. Under the Tories we never saw that kind of growth in good times, and they—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I remind the member from Winnipeg that the Conservatives created a million jobs and the Liberals have promised to create a million jobs. Of course, they've promised a lot of stuff. They promised that they wouldn't raise our taxes; they've raised the largest income tax increase in Ontario's history. They're raising the largest sales tax increase in Ontario's history—

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I'd ask the honourable member from Halton to refer to the members by the ridings they represent. Speaker Steve Peters has spoken on that issue before.

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Interjection.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Thank you for reminding me.

What this government hasn't done is delivered on its promise. It's delivered on very few of its promises over the course of its terms of office.

I mentioned earlier about the terrible debacle they had when they opened the diamond mines. Now we have the opportunity of the so-called Ring of Fire in the north, and yet the mining industry in the world—a lot of it has been centred in Ontario in the past, but the mining industry around the world knows that they can't trust Ontario and the royalty deals that Ontario makes with them, because all of a sudden they can build a mine and a few days before the mine enters, the name of the game changes. What that does to Ontario and its reputation around the world is a real concern for the future of this province.

If you go to northern Ontario, there are two or three things in northern Ontario that are the mainstay of that part of Ontario: pulp and paper and the lumber industry is one and mining is the other. This government is now bringing in a bill called Open Ontario that reminds me very much of closing the barn door after the horse is well down the road.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

There being no more questions and comments, the member from Kenora–Rainy River has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I thank all the members for their comments. I think some of them had nothing to do with the bill, but I will try to get back to the bill in question, Speaker.

The reality is, there are some real challenges for small businesses in this province. When I look at this bill, it doesn't address them. What I hear small businesses saying to me—and it doesn't matter where you are in the province, their big issue is access to credit. That has been borne out by what people on the banking side of things are saying. As I quoted earlier, it's being borne out by what President Obama is saying in the United States and the measures they're trying to take to make sure that small businesses have access to credit.

On the industrial side of things—and it doesn't matter if you're talking to Dofasco or Stelco, now US Steel, in Hamilton, if you're talking to Xstrata in Timmins or Xstrata in Sudbury, or you're talking to Vale Inco, now Vale, in Sudbury, or you're talking to pulp and paper mills, they say their issue is not as the government would want to identify in this bill. Their issue isn't with the Crown Forest Sustainability Act or with some form of environmental regulation. Their issue is, this government is driving the industrial hydro rate in this province through the roof, making it increasingly costly for those major processors to stay in the province.

I look for something to address that in this bill, and I don't find it. But it is very shocking that this government would pick on vulnerable workers through undermining the Employment Standards Act.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak for a few minutes at least on this bill that is in front of us today. Let's be clear that we are debating a bill today which has a title known here right on the bill itself as Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts. Again, the key words are "to promote Ontario as open for business." In that context, we, the government, have put out a message—and this came from the throne speech; parts of these pieces were even before the throne speech took place, but the throne speech sort of laid the groundwork that sent the message out that Ontario, this province, is open for business.

What do we mean when we say we're open for business? Do we mean that we're going to slash all the water inspectors, meat inspectors and other important positions to save money? No, I don't think that's what the intention is. Do we mean to allow people who are mining or drilling to act in perhaps a negligent fashion without proper oversight, which was mentioned by the previous speaker and which is happening right now in the Gulf of Mexico? No, I don't think that's what this bill is about. We're not trying to get rid of these other things over here. We're trying to make this province stronger for business.

The world has changed, and everyone in this room and in the world knows that the world has changed. Since 2008, you saw the so-called global meltdown, which created perhaps the worst recession—some would even call it a depression—in the last at least 50 years, and since then the world has changed. Countries, governments throughout the world—not just a couple of countries like the United States, perhaps, and some European countries, but all around the world countries have gotten together and have decided that things have to change. The world is not the same; we can't go back to the old system. We have to go forward.

What the government's role is in this thing is an interesting phenomenon, because government, first of all, provides stimulus funding. This was worldwide. Whether in the United States or in Europe or here in Canada—the federal government and our own government put in millions and millions of dollars here in Ontario to stimulate the economy by creating jobs and infrastructure programs. But that's not going to solve all the problems in the world, especially in Ontario. Our government, instead of sitting back and saying, "Okay, we've done our part. We've put out the infrastructure monies and we're going to sit and wait and see the economy pick up on its own," said, "No, we have a plan, and the plan is pretty straightforward. The plan is to say to the rest of the world that Ontario is open for business." Ontario wants businesses to come here. Ontario wants businesses to thrive here, because if it doesn't happen here, it will happen somewhere else. We saw that with Samsung, a major company located in South Korea—its head office is there—deciding to open up a new operation. They could have gone to California or they could have gone to another part of the United States or another province, but they did not do that. They came to Ontario. We want companies like that coming to Ontario and hiring Ontario's skilled labour to work in their laboratories, in their factories and in their boardrooms to make sure that Ontario functions and becomes a leader in a lot of different fields.

One of the key roles in government is to bring back confidence. If government doesn't provide confidence out there to the business community—and we're not just talking about Bay Street; we're talking about whether it be small business or multinational corporations, they need to have confidence, and the government has to provide that. We are doing that with this bill. The bill sets out a number of different amendments to other bills, again, not to eliminate important positions such as water

inspectors and so on, but to clarify what their jobs are, what their positions are, and to make them more transparent so that people can see what these inspectors and others are doing.

We think about the world economy and how things change so much. Retired people like my parents, for example, get a government pension that's provided by the federal government, and a little bit of money that they've stashed away, which they live off of right now and which is tied into the stock market. It's odd, but years ago people didn't bother to look at the fact that if the stock market does badly or if bonds are rated lower, then their pensions can be affected, but it can happen to anybody. My parents are very working class. They weren't sophisticated and they're not sophisticated in understanding finance, but they want some stability and confidence to make sure that they're going to be able to live off the pension or the money that they have put away.

I just want to give an example of what happened elsewhere around the world. Not too long ago, the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, decided, "You know what? I'm not going to let this thing sort itself out. What I'm going to do is, I'm going to start bringing in really strong protectionism and really strong systems to prevent the economy from growing."

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There was an article in the Times Online, on May 19, and the headline was "Markets Plunge as Merkel Delivers Euro Warning and Bans Short-Selling." The first line in that article was, "European stock markets fell sharply and the euro hit a four-year low against the dollar today after Germany declared war on speculators, including a surprise ban on ... short-selling" and other measures.

"Ms. Merkel also urged the European Union to speed up supervision of financial markets and to introduce a new tax on them."

The response that came—it's all in the article here—from a financial analyst was that, "The German announcement came out of the blue, without warning, and there is major uncertainty about what this means, whether others will follow and how they will maintain this." This came from Stuart Bennett, currency strategist at Crédit Agricole.

"The backdrop is a very neurotic" worldwide "market which is inclined to give any euro-related news a negative spin, and we have seen standard safe-haven buying" of the US dollar and the Japanese yen.

Just from one announcement, from one chancellor in one part of the world, which created uncertainty, the result was that people have now swayed away from doing business with Europe and in Europe. This continued, even with the situations in Greece and now in Spain. They're not way out there somewhere; we're all intertwined now. What happens in other countries elsewhere around the world will affect us.

We in this country did not have the same problem that occurred in Greece and that is happening now in Spain and perhaps a few other European countries because we've gone ahead and prepared a plan. We are attracting businesses here. The people who are out there investing know that—"You know what? I may not be safe in Europe, but we know it's going to be pretty darn safe in Ontario, and Ontario is taking steps to make business more open."

When you open for business, it doesn't mean you just get rid of all the regulators; you just change the way that they operate. In fact, in some instances they have to work in an even more detailed manner.

I was looking at the bill earlier, and there was a section here that was quite interesting. It's to do with the oil, gas and salt resource sector. The Provincial Offences Act is amended under this act to allow an inspector under this act "to conduct an inspection without a warrant in exigent circumstances where the inspector believes on reasonable grounds that there is evidence of an offence that could be lost, removed or destroyed in the time required to obtain a search warrant. In addition, the powers of an inspector conducting an inspection without a warrant are expanded to make them consistent with the inspection powers of a conservation officer under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997, for example in stopping a vehicle, boat or aircraft, seizing things related to the commission of an offence and arresting a person who the inspector believes on reasonable grounds is committing, has committed or is preparing to commit an offence." This applies to oil, gas and salt resources.

The previous member wanted to talk about the situation in the gulf. We're all dismayed. We're all disappointed at what happened and what is happening in the Gulf of Mexico right now. What I just read out would help prevent those situations from happening. In the United States, the regulators, the people who would look over British Petroleum, weren't hands-on. That was loosened. We're saying that we want to give the people who deal with these permits more power, more ability to scrutinize and make sure that if you're going to go to our natural resources, whether it be oil, gas, salt or so many other resources that we have in this province—lumber; it goes on and on and on; the whole Ring of Fire up north with all the mines and the potential for discovering new minerals and diamonds and so on. We want to give the people who work with the government the opportunity to make sure that they properly regulate who works in here and what kind of work they do. We're not by any means telling inspectors, "Turn a blind eye to what's going on," or "Do you know what? We're going to move inspectors out of this area." We're doing the opposite. We're making their jobs more transparent, more visible and more understandable to the general public, and at the same time giving them powers to do things that perhaps would prevent an event like the thing in the Gulf of Mexico from ever occurring here in Ontario.

I also wanted to address an issue regarding some of the changes in the Ministry of Labour. Earlier, mention was made about the Employment Standards Act in Ontario. It is going to be amended by this bill, and the

Ministry of Labour is striving to streamline the system while maintaining all protection for employees' rights. The ministry is working closely with unions and with worker advocates to ensure that vulnerable workers can fully make their case in the new system. The ministry is working with both sides, the union and worker advocates. The ministry will provide workers with any personal assistance they may need to complete their claims form and obtain relevant information, because one of the problems is that some of the workers or others who want to put in a claim or have a concern don't know how to fill in the forms, and the red tape scares them away. In this act, the Ministry of Labour is going to be empowered with the ability to help these individuals. Some of them may be new Canadians who may not know how to speak the English language or just don't want to deal with the red tape. The government is going to help them deal with that so that their concern or complaint can be dealt with as soon as possible.

In addition, the changes will be communicated in a clear, user-friendly and accessible manner. The Ministry of Labour will provide resources in various formats, including guides, information bulletins, template letters and request-for-payment forms. The Ministry of Labour is also working on an online video to walk claimants through the claim process. Not everybody, but many people have access to a computer. If you don't have a home computer, you can go to the library computer that is usually available in most communities, and there's actually a video that an employee can watch, and they can listen to a person explain how to fill out their forms or their claim in the claim process. The ministry will continue to offer a toll-free call centre to ServiceOntario. Once again, we have a 1-800 number or a 1-888 number that is toll-free that allows to you contact ServiceOntario and eventually speak to a live person to ask for help in filling out your forms.

No reforms will be implemented until the appropriate worker supports are in place. Any of these changes—again, we are dialoguing and have dialogued with the appropriate stakeholders. These things won't take effect until proper worker supports, such as the ones I just mentioned above, are in place.

Again, this bill, Open Ontario, is something that is quite positive in so many ways and allows businesses to come here into Ontario, to function properly in a clear way—because we want businesses to come to Ontario, and if we don't act, they're not going to come here; they're going to go elsewhere.

Look at what Michigan did. They were the number one automaker in North America, if not, perhaps, the whole world. They've lost out because the state government or a combination of the state and federal governments didn't do enough to keep those factories in Michigan. Everyone knows now that the majority of the cars and car parts—Ontario makes more car parts and cars than Michigan does. That's because we've continued throughout the years—at least since the time that I've been here, going all the way back to 2003—to work very hard to bring companies here. We had Toyota come into Ontario and expand just outside of Woodstock; as I mentioned earlier, Samsung; and I know that many others want to come here.

I also want to share a personal experience that I was able to witness myself. Just last week, the High Commissioner for Bangladesh, through the governments of Canada and Ontario, had set up a trade fair at the Metro Convention Centre where over 40 exhibitors, manufacturers and others, from Bangladesh were here in Ontario. They were exhibiting everything. The economies are growing in those countries—China, Brazil and Bangladesh. These are all countries that are moving very quickly.

1650

These exhibitors were there and I had a chance to speak to a lot of them. They were involved in manufacturing pharmaceuticals, even car parts, textiles, and so on. Going from booth to booth, the interesting thing was that they wanted to open up here in Ontario. They wanted to have a plant here as well. They were saying, "How do we open up here in Ontario? We like it here." They know that we have a good health care system for their employees. They know that there's an education system second to nobody in the world, where the children of the employees could go and learn. They like the education system, they like our health care system, and we've worked very hard as a government to make them second to none in the world.

I don't want to repeat what others have said earlier, especially on the government side here, but I can see first-hand, from my own experiences and from reading the newspaper and talking to my parents about how they feel about the economy, that Ontario is in a good position.

It was odd that Oliver Stone, the famous director who has won various Academy Awards, wanted to do another movie similar to the movie that he did years ago called Wall Street, and the American banks and financial institutions wouldn't let him in. They said, "No, we're not going to let you have access to our information."

He had to come here to Canada, and it was a bank in Canada—I shouldn't promote a bank, but it was a bank in Canada, one of the Big Five banks—that said, "You know what? Come and take a look at how we operate." The whole world knows that the banking system in Canada and here in Ontario is world-class, and Bay Street has developed a good reputation. Bay Street is not evil. People think there are a bunch of rich people on Bay Street who wear suits all the time and are just greedy and trying to make money for themselves.

It affects everybody. What happens on Bay Street affects all people in Ontario, whether it be for good or for bad. When Bay Street does well, Ontario does well. It's easy to point a finger at Bay Street and say that they're not helping, but they are a part of the economy and they continue to grow and expand. As a result, Ontario continues to grow and expand and the people in this province are given more opportunities.

Again, we don't want people working only in blue-collar jobs or in unskilled labour. We want them to be skilled. That's why we focused so heavily on the education system here and why we have technology centres like at the University of Waterloo and elsewhere, where education has become so important.

To sum up, my perspective is that I am very proud, as a member of this government, to see this bill put forward. I can't wait until it becomes law. I think that we will be attracting more business here in Ontario and we will be able to compete against not just the rest of Canada or the rest of North America, but the rest of the world, and we will be the place to go.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I listened to the member intently, and he quoted the Oil, Gas, and Salt Resources Act and the changes coming forward there. Of course, I would hope that everyone is very concerned with what's taking place in the Gulf and the aspects there, but it's a different situation here. Most of the oil and gas is stored in a number of underground facilities, so that natural gas is actually pumped into the old oil sites and stored there for extended periods of time. Of course, there are problems with the utilization of non-allowable gases such as carbon dioxide, and those aspects, but the concern I have is that we are constantly moving forward to access without warrant. Inspectors are coming in without warrant on a regular basis, and a lot of the legislation that we are constantly hearing about is moving forward.

How many situations, I would like to know—being that he has quoted this section—have there been where a warrant has been denied or there has been the ability to get on-site to review some of these situations? It's going to move forward, because certainly, a lot of the legislation coming forward appears to have consistency in giving inspectors access without warrant. Moving forward without that ability: I don't know the situation, and if it is a problem, then it's something that needs to be addressed in the courts, to make sure that those warrants—and something needs to change place there to make sure that that access is given. Certainly, we want to protect the environment as much as we can and do everything absolutely possible; however, the way the wording is in the legislation, it is at the discretion of the inspector on what is and what is not allowed. I do have some strong concerns about that. I hopefully will be able to hear some responses as to the number of times a warrant has been issued or denied in that case, so we can get some background information as to where this is coming from.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I listened to my Liberal colleague's speech both while I was in the House and on television, and I hope he takes this the right way: It looks really good on television. That perhaps says something about modern politics: It's what looks good on television that counts. Notwithstanding that it looks good on television, the question I would have to ask of him is, the government—this is really thin gruel, in my view—gets rid of a few acts that I think everybody in this Legislature would admit are out of date; they were passed at a particular time in the history of Ontario to deal with a particular problem. The Liberal government is proposing to do away with a couple of those acts.

I think the government is doing something that will hurt vulnerable workers. I think the government is also doing something that will put environmental protection at risk, but other than that there's not a lot here in this legislation that's going to create jobs. There's nothing in this legislation that deals with the credit crisis that small business is facing. There's nothing to deal with the cost crisis that major processors—for example, the mining processing field and the forest products processing field; there's nothing here that's going to address their problems with hydro rates that have skyrocketed through the roof. I wonder if the member can tell us: What exactly in this bill does the Liberal government think is going to create jobs?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments? The member from Ancaster–Flamborough–Dundas and Westdale.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Thank you. Westdale would never want to be forgotten, Madam Speaker; it's one of the great spots in the riding that I'm privileged to represent, the home of McMaster University. Of course, up in Ancaster we've got Redeemer University and even Mohawk College, which is a neighbour.

But listen, we're not here to talk about my riding; we're here to respond to the member from Scarborough Southwest, who, I want to say—I think he delivered one of the most cogent, timely, prudent addresses I've heard in this Legislative Assembly for a long time. It was amazing how many issues he touched on in the brief few moments that he had. He talked about the need to be forward-looking, not to be looking in the rear-view mirror but to be moving forward, albeit in some cases, as the member from the north has said, incrementally, but that works for Liberals. We just don't want to go backwards. We want to move forwards.

I think he talked about that. He talked about the importance of the stimulus package and building confidence. I can tell you, as one who has been in business, that there's not a lot that the government can do to—experts tell us, a 15% or 20% impact in terms of government programs. It's really business that has to have the confidence. We have to set the table for that. He talked about the environment, and I was really pleased to hear about that, particularly the partnership with our First Nations people, which is excellent.

It occurs to me, too—just in the few seconds I have—that in a world where we can purchase resources, copy technology and borrow capital, the only real advantage we have, ever, is the quality of our workforce, a workforce that can compete very, very well in the global economy. That's what this bill is all about, and I think the

member articulated that exceptionally well. I'm proud of him.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Along with my colleague who just spoke, I was particularly impressed with the presentation that was made by the member from Scarborough Southwest this afternoon. Obviously he spent some time during constituency week last week canvassing a number of the constituents in his riding on a wide variety of areas and talking to them about the Ontario Open for Business Act. You can understand how he took that information—listening intently—from his constituents and bringing here today some of the thoughts that they've certainly provided on this very important piece of legislation, our government's initiative to create faster, smarter and more streamlining of government-to-business services that we'll all benefit from, from Thunder Bay to Cornwall, from Cochrane to Peterborough to Guelph to Sarnia to Windsor—all over this great province.

I had the opportunity to be in the municipality of Douro-Dummer just last Friday night—it's one of the rural parts of Peterborough riding—and I heard a number of reeves and deputies talk about OMAFRA's amendments to the Drainage Act that could result in approximate savings of $1.1 million in that particular field due to administrative costs. We don't have a lot of tile drainage in the great riding of Peterborough, but we have some.

Another area that the member talked about today was where we can take advantage through the Open Ontario concept to do more business on an international basis. I know his riding is full of individuals who came to Canada to seek their destiny. I know he spends a lot of time talking to those individuals, and that was clearly reflected and articulated this afternoon in his presentation on this important act.

I'd like to add that with the GDP numbers this morning, Ontario is growing at rate of some 3.7% in our first quarter.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Scarborough Southwest has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I would like to thank the member from Oshawa, the member from Kenora–Rainy River, the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale and the member from Peterborough for their comments.

All one needs to do is read the Daily Commercial News for today, May 31. It's an international publication that says, "Despite Setbacks, Ontario's Economy Has a Strong Foundation." It says that the G20 has been selected to take place in Toronto; the Pan Am Games have been awarded to Toronto and parts of Ontario; "The Bay Street financial community has won the respect of the world"; provincial academic institutions are second to none; high-tech has become a major growth industry here; and many new transit projects are taking place all throughout this province, all the way from the Windsor bridge to transit systems in Ottawa and highways leading all the way up to Sudbury and beyond.

I think the member from Kenora–Rainy River mentioned: Where in this act does it say we're going to create new jobs? I didn't find a section that said—section 24(a) or whatever—new jobs will be created. But what this does for business people who are out there, who are sitting there in their offices deciding, "Where should I locate my business?" is give them confidence. Maybe the name of the act should be the "confidence act" because businesses operate on confidence, and if you have a group of rules that you have here and amendments that are modern and up to date and make this a healthy environment here in Ontario, then people will locate here.

We're not talking about "maybe they'll come here." They have come here. Samsung came here. Toyota came here. So many other businesses have come here. You will see that more will come to Ontario than anywhere else in the world.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 68, the so-called Open for Business Act. This is a large omnibus bill that includes changes to 10 different ministries.

I know that the member from York–Simcoe, who is the PC critic for consumer services, small business and red tape, has done a great job raising some of the concerns of the PC caucus. I know that critics in other areas are going to go into depth on the issues in their portfolio, so I'm going to focus my remarks on the impact on our agriculture industry.

When the minister introduced this act, she didn't even mention agriculture. Despite the fact that this omnibus bill contains amendments to nine different agriculture acts, it demonstrates once again the lack of respect this government has for the agriculture industry and our farmers. It demonstrates that, once again, the Minister of Agriculture's voice is not being heard at the cabinet table.

When she introduced this act, the Minister of Economic Development claimed that, "The Open for Business Act, if passed, would help Ontario businesses focus on what they do best: creating jobs for Ontario families." She's ignoring that the agriculture industry in Ontario and Ontario's farmers create jobs. In fact, they're one of the biggest sectors of our Ontario economy. This government is trying to use this omnibus bill to hide the fact that they're once again cutting support for farmers. This legislation is a wolf in sheep's clothing, and the government doesn't even want to pay for the damages that wolf causes.

The impact of the proposed changes to the Livestock, Poultry and Honey Bee Protection Act is that farmers will no longer be entitled to compensation for livestock or poultry that are killed by coyotes and wolves. The

McGuinty government is cutting compensation for honey bees killed by bears, and they are cutting compensation for poultry and livestock killed by dogs in unorganized territories. They had been paying that until now; this act says they will no longer do that. I'm amazed that the government is so out of touch with rural Ontario and the agriculture community that they are doing the exact opposite of what agriculture groups across the province have been asking for.

Currently, farmers who lose livestock to predators such as dogs, wolves or coyotes apply to their local municipality and receive compensation for their losses. The municipality is responsible for the cost of livestock and poultry which is killed by dogs, but the province reimburses the municipalities for any compensation they pay for livestock killed by wolves and coyotes. Since the Ministry of Natural Resources is responsible for controlling the population of wolves and coyotes, it makes sense that the province would have a responsibility for the losses that farmers suffer when the population gets too high.

For years, farmers have been asking that the compensation model for livestock killed by predators be updated and that the Livestock, Poultry and Honey Bee Protection Act be expanded to include more predators.

The Christian Farmers released a position statement on predation management and crop harvesting by wildlife, which said, "The CFFO endorses the modernization of the predation compensation program such that the program reimburses farmers based on the appropriate fair market value of livestock destroyed by wildlife; compensation should reflect ongoing, non-lethal production damage that results from stress or terrorized animals, based on the past records of the individual operation."

The OFA recommended "that the Ontario government update the Livestock, Poultry and Honey Bee Protection Act to include more predators, livestock and poultry. Secondly, the compensation schedule must be updated to reflect current livestock and poultry values."

In a 2008 letter to the Minister of Natural Resources, the OFA said, "As you know, the OFA has made wildlife crop damages and predation a top priority. In recent years, the increase in crop and livestock losses has escalated. The situation has become intolerable as compensation for economic loss is either nonexistent or woefully inadequate. The rapid increase in the cost of farm inputs, notably fuels, has further increased the direct financial losses to farmers." Farmers and farm organizations were asking that compensation be based on updated market values, not that they be removed from legislation completely.

As the OFA mentioned in their letter, the problem with livestock and predators has been growing. We have been hearing reports from farmers across Ontario about increases in the coyote population. The Kingston Whig-Standard recently called it a "coyote explosion."

Ontario Sheep said, "Livestock predation in Ontario has increased over the past few years to the point where in some case it threatens to put farmers out of business."

In 2009, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association passed several resolutions at their annual general meeting which all talked about the increased loss of livestock to predators and the need for the government to provide better compensation.

The Ministry of Natural Resources admitted earlier this year that the ministry doesn't track the coyote population in Ontario. In fact, when she was asked by a member of her own caucus in this Legislature whether the population was increasing, she avoided answering the question.

Farmers across Ontario are losing calves, sheep and poultry to coyotes. There are stories of farmers losing dozens of calves or 30 sheep to coyotes. That is a significant loss to those farmers. The problem here is that the number of livestock being lost to predators is increasing, and that it is increasing the cost to both the farmers and the province. Instead of looking for solutions like controlling the coyote population, the province is ignoring the real problem and cutting their costs by dumping the full cost onto the farmers.

1710

It isn't just compensation for livestock lost to wolves and coyotes that is being cut. The McGuinty government is also cutting compensation to beekeepers who lose their colonies to bears. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs website, "The purpose of the program is to encourage production of honey in Ontario by having beekeepers report damage caused by bears and by compensating them for losses suffered."

If the goal of the program was to increase honey production, what message is the McGuinty government sending by cutting that program? Most beekeepers in Ontario have relatively low incomes. A recent survey found that the gross income for 37% of them was less than $20,000 a year. There are already concerns about the decline in the bee population in Ontario. The government should be looking at what they can do to increase the industry, not cutting the program that our beekeepers depend on.

In most areas of the province, the municipal government is responsible for providing compensation for livestock killed by dogs. In areas where there is no municipal government, the province ensures that farmers would be compensated. This act removes that section and leaves the farmer to attempt to determine whose dog attacked the livestock and go after the owner of the animal, if they can be found. I think we all know that in most cases locating the owner of the dog and collecting the payment isn't going to be easy, and many of the farmers won't be compensated.

This is just the latest in a series of cuts that the Ministry of Agriculture has made to programs that support our farmers. Last year, it was cutting the subsidies to the deadstock disposal program, which helped farmers safely get rid of dead farm animals. Just a few weeks ago, there was an article in the Ontario Farmer that mentioned that there is now less deadstock being picked up from the farms. We warned the Minister of Agriculture last year

that this problem would occur, and she didn't listen. I hope that the new minister is paying attention now. If those animals aren't disposed of properly, they're going to lead to environmental risks and encourage more wild predators.

One of the few government programs that was working for farmers was the grain and oilseeds business risk management program, but this government ended that program, too.

They announced a program to help abattoirs meet the many new regulations, but it turns out that they ended the program and only spent 75% of the money they allocated. Several weeks ago in this Legislature, when I questioned her about the program, the minister claimed, "We will always meet the demand of the applications." I know that many abattoirs are being closed or are in danger of being closed because they can't meet those regulations, so I'm happy to hear that the minister is going to help them.

Within a few hours, I faxed her a letter asking that she post the application on OMAFRA's website and send my office a copy so that we could get them to the abattoirs where they were in demand. I'm still waiting for the application and a response to my letter.

In a few weeks, farmers will be taking another loss when the HST goes into effect and they lose their point-of-sale exemption. Currently farmers can go into the store and show their farm organization card when they make a farm purchase, and they automatically are exempt from the PST. This could have been continued, but the McGuinty government didn't care enough about our farmers to negotiate a point-of-sale exemption. Now the farmers will have to pay the HST and get their own money back from the government.

If this government was in touch with the reality of Ontario's farms, they would know that many farms operate at least part of the year on lines of credit and that waiting for their money to come back will increase their borrowing costs. Once again, no one in the McGuinty government was standing up for the farmers or thinking about how these changes would impact them.

The agriculture industry in Ontario has had a couple of tough years. Hog and cattle prices have meant that farmers have had a loss on every animal they sold. Input costs have been increasing, including wages, energy and fuel. Farmers who export have been dealing with the high Canadian dollar. Many farmers are already struggling, and every time they turn around, the government is quietly cutting another program that's supposed to be helping them.

Farmers have been asking for a new support program based on the cost of production, which would ensure that they could continue to farm even when market prices are down for several years in a row. Eight of the largest non-supply-managed commodity groups have come together with one voice to say this is what the agriculture industry needs. So far, the province has taken no action to help them. They have made excuses and promised to lobby on behalf of farmers. Farmers don't need a lobbyist; it is a responsible government that they need, one that will take real action to address the problems that farmers are facing, one that will be honest and direct about the actions they are taking, not to try and hide the cuts in the omnibus bills like this one we have today.

Later this week, my colleague from Simcoe–Grey will be bringing forward a resolution calling for a business risk management program based on the cost of production. I hope that all members on the opposite side in this Legislature will demonstrate real support for our farmers by voting for that resolution.

I said I would focus my remarks today on this area of the act because I want to ensure that the voice of the farmers and the agriculture industry is heard on this important issue. This is another cut to farmers, and the government should not be allowed to slip it through by burying it in a red tape bill.

To ensure that farmers get the opportunity to have their input and talk about how these changes will affect them, I believe that there should be consultations across the province, including communities that are convenient for our agriculture community. There are a number of questions and other issues that are raised in this act, and I look forward to extensive committee hearings to hear from all the stakeholders that are affected by it.

As you know, this act was introduced only 14 days ago, and it contains 166 pages. It affects 10 different ministries. The ministry provided a general briefing on the day that it was introduced. But as you would know, Madam Speaker, that was several days before the bill was actually printed, and we would receive a copy when it was printed. Our request, through the critic's office, for another briefing once the bill was printed was refused by the minister and the ministry.

Mr. Robert Bailey: How can they do that?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I don't know, but they did it.

That certainly doesn't sound like the government is open. However, I'm pleased that the government has finally listen to us about the fact that there is too much government red tape.

The definition—and I think this is very important—of red tape is regulation and legislation that is completely redundant.

Our party believes that you should get rid of red tape whenever you identify it. I remember that in 1995, when we first started talking about red tape, the Liberal Party said they were going to get rid of 50% of it. Well, if you can identify it all and it's completely useless and redundant regulation or legislation, I don't know why anybody would promise to only get rid of 50% of it. It would seem to me that getting rid of it all would be the answer.

Today, we have a similar situation: The McGuinty government has said that for every new regulation they will get rid of two. If you know what regulations are redundant and unnecessary, why would you wait for new regulations to be implemented? Why not get rid of those that you've identified now?

When we were in government, in our first year in office, we established a Red Tape Commission, and we passed 15 red-tape-reduction acts. We took several steps to reduce red tape for farmers, like creating a point-of-sale exemption and changing the farm property tax system so they no longer had to wait to get their own money back from government. The government's goal of getting rid of red tape is commendable but, as always, it's the implementation that's the challenge here today.

Farmers will tell you that they're still facing more burdens and more paperwork. They will tell you that OMAFRA is less about helping farmers to succeed than trying to catch them doing something wrong. Farmers will tell you about getting contradictory instructions from different ministries.

Agribusinesses that are trying to invest in Ontario will tell you that they can't get a clear answer on what the regulations are and what requirements they must meet.

The greenhouses will tell you that while the government is spending huge amounts of money on renewable energy, they can't get past the red tape for their environmentally friendly cogeneration program—and there's nothing about that in this bill, either.

Talking about cutting red tape and being open for business isn't enough. It takes action, and so far this government isn't succeeding.

In fact—this is rather interesting—in an internal report from OMAFRA in the first year of implementing this open-for-business policy, the business plan from OMAFRA said, "Changes were made in this quarter to nine acts. We were able to report a burden reduction of 957 by repealing, revoking and/or amending sections to the Farm Products Grades and Sales Act; the Farm Products Marketing Act; the Ontario Agricultural Museum Act; the Dead Animal Disposal Act; the Food Safety and Quality Act; the Animals for Research Act; and the Animal Disposal Act." The important number in that is 957.

The next part of that same report reads, "We did report 962 additional burdens as new regulations were enacted under the Nutrient Management Act and the Food Safety and Quality Act as part of the deadstock file. Also, a new regulation was enacted under the Ontario Food Terminal Act and an amending regulation was made to the Animals for Research Act." Well, those two numbers, 957 and 962, that was an increase of five regulations. Remember, we were going to eliminate two for every one we put in place.

This is even more interesting: The report went on to say, "With an established strategy in place, OMAFRA is on track towards reaching its 25% burden reduction target as well as completing its identified projects to open for business." That means in the first year of implementing open-for-business, the regulations affecting farmers actually increased by five.

This must be some kind of new Liberal math, that you can increase the number of regulations and say you're on track to cutting red tape two to one.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: How is that possible?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm not sure how that would be possible.

Having said that, I hope the government will continue to take steps. Even though they haven't been very successful so far, I hope they would keep taking steps to reduce the red tape.

I don't see that there's much great interest in here for government listening. They're not known for listening to the opposing view, shall we say. In fact, they're not even interested in hearing—

Interjection.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Well, they don't even want to hear from the people from Ontario.

If all had gone the way it should in this place, today, I believe, we could have been debating a motion to give the people of Ontario an opportunity to vote on whether they thought it was appropriate to have the HST implemented or whether they should wait with that till after the next election so the people could decide. But the government saw fit not to have that opposition day today, and I think because of that, I'd move adjournment of this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Hardeman has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1722 to 1752.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Hardeman has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour will please stand and remain standing until counted.

All those opposed will please stand and remain standing until counted.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): The ayes are 8 and the nays are 40.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I declare that the motion has been defeated.

Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I had almost finished my presentation when I was so concerned about there not being enough people hearing it.

I think businesses and farmers need to know that they have a government they can count on to be clear and honest. The sections that remove legislative compensation have to be taken out of this bill instead of trying to sneak them through.

With that, I'd like to move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Hardeman has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I would say the nays have it.

This will be a 30-minute bell. Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 1754 to 1824.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Would members please take their seats.

Mr. Hardeman has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour will please rise and stay standing until counted.

All those opposed will please rise and stay standing until counted.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): The ayes are 2; the nays are 36.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I declare that the motion has been defeated.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I also declare that the House is going to be recessed until 6:45 p.m.

I declare the House now recessed.

The House recessed from 1825 to 1845.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margarett R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
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Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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of Ontario
Second Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 39e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 31 May 2010

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 31 mai 2010



Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 31 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 31 mai 2010

The House recessed from 1825 to 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 31, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 68, Loi favorisant un Ontario propice aux affaires en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: This is a bad bill.

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I know members on the government side are shocked to hear me say that.

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Some are appalled, but most of them are just shocked.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes.

This is a deregulation bill. Frankly, the reality—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm interested in hearing the arguments that the government will put forward on this.

The reality is that in the last year or two years, we've seen the impact of deregulation on the world economy and, frankly, on the environment in the Gulf of Mexico, something that my colleague Howard Hampton spoke to earlier today, in a way that one would think would take this government and bring it back to its senses.

If you look at the history of regulation and deregulation on this continent, if you look at the Great Depression and the fact that the deregulation of the financial system was central to the collapse of the financial system in 1929, led to a long depression, and that depression in turn caused the development of rules around the management of money and finance that changed the way things operated for decades—the simple reality there was that because those rules were in effect, businesses were not able to run the sorts of unjustifiable risks that they had with people's money. They were not able to play around the way they had in the 1920s.

We went through a period in the western and industrialized world of unprecedented growth for many decades, but companies driven by the need to produce good results every quarter decided that in fact their interest was breaking down that regulation and bringing in a financial system that allowed very large-scale gambling with people's money.

We had bubbles in the 1980s and 1990s that affected the world economy.

And in 2008, we had the great meltdown. I don't think you can have any clearer indication of the failure of a deregulation agenda in everyday people's lives than that particular incident.

I received an email today from people in Vancouver who are part of the group of investors who lost $35 billion in the asset-backed commercial paper market. They were not protected in a deregulated world. In fact, their retirement income was put at profound risk.

To say that the way we're going to build business in Canada, in Ontario, is by deregulating is an abdication of this government's responsibility for protection of the economy, the environment and the population.

This bill doesn't deal with finances. I use finances as an illustration. It deals with employment standards, and it deals with the environment.

As my colleague from Kenora–Rainy River said earlier today, look at the growing stain of oil that is covering the Gulf of Mexico, washing up on the shores of Louisiana, for a clear picture of what happens when you let companies engage in risky activities and do not properly regulate them.

Some people think that all problems are ultimately technically fixable. I have to say to you that in fact there are some risks to populations, economies and environments that can only be prevented. They cannot be properly corrected afterward.

1850

No one knows when that oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico will be dealt with, because we have not in the past dealt with oil leaks at that depth and at those pressures. Every measure that has been taken so far has failed. It's my hope that something that is attempted soon will be successful to prevent the damage to that economy and, frankly, ultimately to ours, because here in Ontario we depend on oil from outside Ontario.

If offshore drilling is substantially reduced—because it produces a large amount of oil to the United States—there's an excellent chance that it will have an impact on the cost of oil and gas here in Ontario. It will affect our

economy. Louisiana produces large volumes of seafood consumed throughout North America. If that supply of seafood is cut off, it will have an impact on the price of the food that we pay for in restaurants and in grocery stores.

Deregulation under the Bush regime around environmental protection did not protect the people and certainly has not protected the economy of that country. And here we are in a situation where the minister has brought forward a change to our environmental regulations that will substantially reduce the right of people to speak to those regulations, the right of people to intervene and the responsibility of government to correctly assess what's going on when a company wants to come forward and do something and to have the kind of oversight that we require.

Speaker, you may well be aware of the development of shale gas in Pennsylvania; you may be aware that there are many companies that are looking to develop shale gas here in Ontario. You may also be aware that in the state of New York, shale gas developments are now restricted around the city of New York and one other city—I think it's Rochester—for fear of contamination of the water supply. Major cities like New York may have been able to protect themselves against shale gas, but there are many cities and towns and villages in southwestern Ontario that depend on groundwater for their water supplies. If shale gas development proceeds, there may well be a risk to those water supplies, and if in fact we roll back our environmental protection and we roll back the oversight of the Ministry of the Environment, if we roll back citizens' rights to intervene and speak, then it may well be that those developments will go forward without, in the end, your constituents, Mr. Speaker, or others actually having the opportunity to intervene in the way that they need to intervene.

A media release was put out by some of the major environmental groups in this province: Ecojustice, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, and the Canadian Environmental Law Association. I'll just read into the record what they have to say about the changes to our environmental protections.

"'The proposed legislation lays the foundation for the rollback of public participation rights in Ontario,' said Ramani Nadarajah, counsel with the Canadian Environmental Law Association. 'The government's action would undermine important legal rights which Ontario citizens have had since the enactment of the Environmental Bill of Rights in 1994.'"

It's 16 years since those rights were put into place. I listened to the Minister of the Environment talk earlier about his big focus being the move from paper records to computerized records. That isn't what's at issue here. All kinds of administrations can go from paper to computerized records without undermining the right of participation and the right of self-protection that is afforded to people by the Environmental Bill of Rights. When you have significant environmental organizations like this one saying that this is a rollback on environmental protection, I think you have to pay attention. When you hear them saying that, you don't have to agree with them immediately, but you should pay substantial attention to what they have to say, because they do have a fair amount of expertise and what one could call acting as a neutral party. They don't have a partisan interest, but they do have a deep interest in and commitment to environmental protection.

"Maureen Carter-Whitney, research director with the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, stated, 'The Open for Business Act closes the door for citizen input into a significant number of the government's environmental decision-making processes and will prevent potential environmental problems from being identified and corrected.'"

Why would a government do that? What is the advantage to business to come into a jurisdiction where environmental protection has been weakened? Very seriously, what is the advantage to businesses in doing that? Do you come into a jurisdiction where the water may be at risk, where the air is not fit to breathe and where there's contamination of land? People who are listening to me today who are involved in business where people have bought land that's contaminated know very well that if their interests are protected in the environment, they don't have to deal with huge cleanup costs and huge liability issues.

It does no good for business to come into a jurisdiction where they have to worry about the quality of water that they take from municipal water lines or from the ground, either for consumption in a plant or use for an industrial purpose. It doesn't help business if those environmental laws are undermined.

One of the constraints on industrial development in China has been the lack of clean, usable, fresh water for industrial purposes. And it isn't just a question of a simple lack of water itself; the level of contamination of water is such that in many cases water is not usable even for industrial purposes because it's so contaminated.

So I have to ask again: If the method of making Ontario open for business is undermining our environmental protection, what really is the government's view of what kind of business you're going to attract? Are you going to attract business that is interested in high-value, high-quality products, or the dirtiest possible? Are you looking to develop a jurisdiction where you will be engaged in a race to the bottom with a variety of jurisdictions because you in fact are a place where you can go and ignore environmental regulations because the protections have been rolled back? That is a substantial concern not just for the people who live in this province, not just for the generations to come who will depend on a stable, clean environment, but for the businesses that the government says it wants to attract. Why would they come to a low-protection, low-quality environment?

"'The government's proposed act weakens accountability by decision-makers,' said Elaine MacDonald, senior scientist at Ecojustice. 'The government will no longer be required by law to take the public's views and

opinions into account before the affected environmental decisions are finalized or implemented.'

"The environmental groups have called upon the government to amend the proposed act so as to leave intact the public notice and comment and third party appeal rights under the Environmental Bill of Rights."

That isn't just a question of going from paper to a computerized system; that talks about the fundamental rights of citizens to have input into the environmental decision-making that they will have to live with for decades. The government, I think, is going to have to do a lot of explaining—not to me; I don't think they're credible on this, but they're going to have to do a lot of explaining to the public and say, "We're taking away your rights and your protections because we think that somewhere out there a company like BP is going to be attracted to operating in this jurisdiction."

BP has found that they did very well in a jurisdiction where they didn't have to deal with the plethora of regulatory rules when it came to offshore oil drilling, and they figure, "Ontario—that's great. Ontario's a wonderful place; we'll see if we can get into natural gas development there. They don't mind rolling back environmental protection, rolling back the environmental rights of citizens in this province."

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It is amazing to me that this government has decided that deregulation is the direction to go in. This is a government that has often thought of itself or presented itself as an alternative to the approach that Mike Harris took in the 1990s, and yet here we have rollbacks that we didn't see even then. How do they justify that in terms of the story they present to Ontario on their approach to environmental protection, their approach to democratic rights? It certainly isn't in keeping with the story we've been given. It certainly isn't in keeping with the approach that they say they have when they come to deal with this province.

My colleague from Kenora–Rainy River talked earlier about the Employment Standards Act and the weakening there, the reduction of workers' rights. I have to say to you that I deal with constituents of mine who have been involved in work situations where they never got paid. I deal with constituents who have dealt with employers who really needed to be taken on and straightened out. This act isn't going to help working people who need to have the government on their side protecting them, dealing with unscrupulous employers. This is a rollback. Have we decided that, instead of following a model of fairly well paid and fairly well protected jobs, we are going to compete with Brazil or Mexico in rolling back standards so that we're more attractive to companies that don't actually have an interest in paying people decent wages, that don't have an interest in making sure that people can live lives they are happy with?

In the end, an agenda of deregulation is one that will leave Ontario dirtier, poorer and less attractive to investment. You may call it "open for business"; I don't think that's a realistic or accurate description. I think we've decided that some companies will be much happier if they don't have to deal with any rules, and we've decided to make them happy. That isn't going to build the economy of this province. That is a strategy that simply takes us back quite a few decades to a period when people in this province didn't have environmental protection, didn't have the right to environmental protection and had far less protection in the workplace.

I'd say to the government: If you want to actually open Ontario for business, then abandon this neoconservative strategy and move forward to a strategy that in fact develops 21st-century technologies, makes sure that people are paid adequately and makes sure that we have the quality of environment that attracts those businesses that have a long-term interest in operating here. Understand what provides stability in a society; understand what opens opportunity in a society. Then we'd have a strategy that would be worth pursuing.

This bill is not worth pursuing. This bill needs to be defeated, and I call on the government to look again at this bill and, frankly, drop it; let it go back into a table, into a file folder somewhere, and forget about it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to comment on the speech by my friend from Oxford and perhaps comment a bit about what my friend from Toronto–Danforth has just said.

The member for Oxford said we're not going fast enough. We're not deregulating; we're not getting rid of regulations. We're not getting rid of all those things. Probably, I agree with him, because that's not what we're doing. We're re-regulating, not deregulating.

My friend from Toronto–Danforth talks about the financial markets and all the deregulation this is going to do to them, I guess. Obviously, it's not; it doesn't deal with it at all. He talks about the petroleum industry, which we all know is causing great grief in the Gulf of Mexico. But this doesn't deal with it at all.

We are introducing this bill to have a full debate, because we want to have a province that's open for business, to create faster, smarter and more streamlined government-to-business services and regulations that will make Ontario attractive for business development while protecting the public interest. We are making it easier for companies to do business in Ontario, because a strong economy means a strong province for all Ontarians. By reducing the regulatory burden in Ontario by 25% by 2011, we will be building a foundation for improving services to business that protects the public interest, fosters business competitiveness and welcomes new business to this province. All our efforts are a direct response to requests for greater transparency, predictability and certainty.

I'm sure that the opposite ends of the poles we just heard from in the last two interventions would both agree that re-regulation is good for all the people of the province of Ontario, good for the environment, good for business and good for the people we serve.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I find myself sitting somewhere in the middle between those two opposing poles. I agree with the member from Toronto–Danforth that the direction of this bill is of great concern, but the reasons for concern are where he and I differ.

I see this bill as a re-regulation or deregulation bill, which has some appeal to it. The problem is that many of the examples we've had expressed in this debate in the House today haven't been thought through well enough, so it leaves the area of business that is involved in a somewhat more vulnerable position. I'll give you the example of agriculture, which my friend from Oxford spoke about eloquently just late this afternoon.

In that case, you are re-regulating some of the animal welfare regulations, and the consequences of that are going to fall back on the most vulnerable people in the supply chain. When that happens, of course, those vulnerable people are going to be less competitive. And if you're less competitive because of the re-regulation the government has entered into, there are not going to be as many businesses of that type and that nature in the province.

I'm afraid that is a common theme. You've looked for areas to re-regulate, but you haven't thought through the consequences. Many of the consequences aren't going to build business in this province. Because the responsibility is falling back on those businesses, it's going to increase their costs, and that's going to make it more difficult for them to compete. You're going to achieve exactly the opposite of what you intended for this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm very pleased to enter this debate on Bill 68. There certainly seems to be some confusion as to what we're trying to do with this bill. Clearly, we need to have Ontario open for business. We've just gone through an incredibly difficult recession, and we need to respond to that by ensuring that, in every way we can, we encourage those businesses, both large and small.

Just to pick up on the member for Toronto–Danforth's comments in relation to the changes that the Ministry of the Environment is proposing—the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act—what we're doing is we're moving to a modern, risk-based approach for approvals, and the proposed changes will reduce the administrative burden on businesses.

We need to look at what we've been doing so far. The Ministry of the Environment receives something like 6,000 requests for certificates of approval each year. Whether you're just asking to change a fan or a new HVAC system, or whether you're intending to build a new steel plant, you go through the exact same process, and this doesn't make any sense. What we are moving to is something where, for simple, low-risk activities, we're going to create a very streamlined approach. Where there are activities that may pose more risk to the environment, there will be more time for Ministry of the Environment staff to assess those projects in a great deal more depth.

This is not any attempt at deregulation whatsoever. I feel that we're simply moving in a way that many other jurisdictions around the world have. This is an improvement; a real step forward.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: From 1996 to 1999 I was the Minister of Environment for this great province. During that period of time I was attempting as minister to take about 30 years of environmental regulations and put some rhyme and reason to them. When you build a pile from the bottom to the top, when the papers are being added on the top, the regulations on top don't necessarily meld with those on the bottom.

When I was attempting to do this, it was necessary to change standards, to look at different factors, all based on the science presented to me by the Ministry of Environment staff. I was accused of the very same thing that the government is being accused of today: that I was deregulating; I wasn't re-regulating. I've heard that comment come back from the government benches, that they're re-regulating. That was the argument I put forward at the time for the government, and in fact that's what I was doing during my tenure as Minister of Environment.

We have groups like the environmental law association or whatever they call themselves, and their interest is in criticizing and saying that the government deregulates, regardless of their intentions. So I say to the government: Work on through your regulations. Just make the process open, what you're doing, and base it in science. That's the way to re-regulate as you go forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Toronto–Danforth, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to thank the members from Algoma–Manitoulin, Halton, Oak Ridges–Markham and Carleton–Mississippi Mills for addressing my presentation.

The Minister of the Environment has been slow on processing certificates of approval, but I think the problem has more to do with inadequate funding and staffing than it does with over-regulation. I think that's a core problem that was not addressed in the last budget or previous budgets. The government has looked at this and said, "We're not going to put enough money into this ministry to actually enforce the regulations we have on the books. How do we get around that?" Rather than dealing with the problem, making sure that we have adequate regulatory protection and adequate citizen involvement, we have this system of permit-by-rule, which environmental organizations that have followed this issue very closely have analyzed and looked at the legal consequences and the environmental consequences of and have said that this is a wrong step; this will reduce citizen participation, rights and protection.

I listened to the member from Oak Ridges–Markham. She said that we just went through an incredibly difficult recession. If I recollect properly, that recession was triggered by a deregulated financial environment. Someone in the United States said, "We have too many regulations on these banks and financial companies. We should peel them away so they can really produce the way they want to produce." Well, you get consequences.

The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills talked about being criticized for attempting to rationalize environmental regulations when he was Minister of Environment. I wasn't around at that point. I wasn't part of that discussion, but my guess is that the very same members who are protecting this bill criticized him.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a report from the Integrity Commissioner entitled Report of the Review of Expense Claims Covering the Period April 1, 2009, to March 31, 2010, pursuant to the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002.

Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It certainly gives me great pleasure to continue this discussion on Bill 68, the Open for Business Act, in particular to concentrate on the modernization of approvals in the Ministry of the Environment but also to talk about some of the other important components of this particular bill.

First of all, we need to be very clear. The Ministry of the Environment is proposing to transform Ontario's approvals process to create a modern, user-friendly approach that remains fully protective of the environment—and I want to emphasize that, as the member for Toronto–Danforth in particular seemed to be casting aspersions on what we were trying to do with this bill. We are absolutely committed to full protection of the environment.

If passed, the new system would enhance public transparency and environmental protection while improving service to business. The best interests of Ontarians remains the key priority at every step.

The proposed legislation includes provisions to develop and implement a new risk-based registry and approvals system. The proposed changes include improving environmental protection by focusing resources on activities that pose the greatest risk; enhancing public transparency through a searchable electronic registry; and providing online tools that make applying and obtaining approvals easier for business.

How will this new system work? This new risk- and performance-based environmental permitting and approvals system will feature:

—a registry for minor, low-risk activities. This is what I was alluding to earlier. If you're going to put in a back-up generator, you simply apply through the registry;

—strengthening the approvals process for remaining activities. These are the complex kinds of applications; and

—a new electronic service delivery system that will support new business processes and meet stakeholder e-business needs.

We're going to be using a risk-based approach. Under the current process, Ontario receives more than 6,000 requests for certificates of approval each year. Many are for activities that pose a low risk to the environment and human health, yet each must go through the exact same process. There was a backlog last year. There were some 1,700 applications. It's not a question of insufficient staffing. It was simply that there was a lot of paper processing that had to be gone through—and the Ministry of the Environment staff have gone through all those applications. There is no backlog at the moment.

It is clear that Ontario needs an updated, risk-based approach that reflects our environmental and economic values. The new process would focus resources and efforts on activities that pose the greatest risk to the environment and public health. This risk-based model has already been successfully implemented in other modern regulatory jurisdictions such as New York, mentioned by our colleague from Toronto–Danforth—in his view, as it relates to the shale gas issue—a model also introduced in California and the United Kingdom. This approach is also used in Alberta and British Columbia, and Saskatchewan will follow suit.

Modernization of approvals could save business as much as 25% of a project's application costs.

Looking at this environmental registry, the proposed legislation would allow the province to build a modern approval system for the 21st century by creating a new environmental registry for lower-risk and less complex activities or sectors. Businesses would be able to register their activity online. An accountable person would declare that the facility will operate in accordance with registry regulations.

Key features of this registry include: a more efficient and timely process for lower-risk activities and sectors; clear rules for activities eligible for registration; online registration; a searchable database of registered businesses and activities; and then confirmation of registration provided when complete.

The activities on the registry are expected to be subject to eligibility and operating requirements. This would allow more resources to be devoted to approval applications for activities that pose the greatest risk to the environment.

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In terms of the environmental compliance approvals—this is for activities that are more complex and higher risk—an approval would still be required. This new system will include features designed to match the operational realities of businesses, including single approvals for businesses with multiple activities or locations. At present, businesses with several different sites need a separate certificate of approval for each site. This is going to eliminate that requirement. The approval will have flexibility to make regular operational changes, and

it will create a process that sets a level playing field for old and new businesses.

Environmental approvals are a necessary requirement of doing business in Ontario for activities that have emissions to the environment. This will not change. But if passed, the proposed legislation would strengthen Ontario's environmental protection by providing greater transparency and focusing resources on activities that pose the greatest risk to the environment.

With this legislation, we will have in place an online transparent approvals process that allows for better data collection and sharing; there will be a searchable public website for all activities subject to registration or approval; and there will be better information-sharing to ensure informed decision-making for environmental approvals.

The member for Toronto–Danforth also implied that somehow there was not sufficient consultation on these changes, but certainly last winter the Ministry of the Environment started a series of stakeholder discussions on the proposed approach to modernize approvals. Consultations included a round table of 24 environmental and industry experts who provided advice on matters relating to developing and implementing the new process. The proposed approach was also posted on the environmental registry for a period of 45 days for public comment in March and April 2010. Ontario will invite further input from the round table and other stakeholders, including aboriginal communities, should Ontario develop regulations and implement the proposed changes.

If the legislation passes, the new approval model would be introduced and implemented over the next two years. Further regulations may follow beyond September 2012 to transition additional sectors and activities to the registry or new environmental compliance approval processes.

Stakeholders have certainly had their say. The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, along with numerous other industry associations, including the Ontario Mining Association, the Ontario Forest Industries Association, the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association and others, wrote the Premier in December 2008 and in June 2009 encouraging the government to move forward on modernizing environmental approvals with a risk-based approach.

In fact, in 2000 and 2004 the provincial Auditor General made a number of recommendations on the Ministry of the Environment's approvals system, including the need to improve its information systems to allow for risk-based assessments; update certificates of approvals in a timely and efficient manner; and improve the timeliness of processing new applications.

The Ministry of the Environment has been meeting and will continue to meet regularly with a stakeholder round table that includes broad representation, including business and environmental groups.

Industry is certainly supportive of operational flexibility, so that approvals would set ranges of allowed activities so that industry wouldn't need to reapply for an approval to make small process changes.

The registration process will be well understood. It will take a registry process, as opposed to a complex environmental compliance approval process.

There will be transition provisions so that these new requirements will be phased in over time.

We expect shorter delivery times, a clear process and clear submission requirements.

Environmental groups have been supportive of the increased transparency and information access; the updating of approvals for legacy operations; and again, the multimedia approvals that facilitate an ecosystem approach, so that where there may be an impact on air, water or land, one approval process will be required as opposed to several. In fact, there will be the ability to consider past compliance history in the evaluation of the approval.

Overall, what we are trying to do is essentially a modernization, bringing up to date, improving transparency, and in no way do we feel that this is akin to any deregulation that we've seen through previous administrations. We are saying categorically that this registry will not diminish Ontario's oversight and weaken environmental protection. We are committed to protecting the environment and ensuring that the best interests of the people of Ontario remain the priority at every step.

There will be new compliance tools for the registry, so that there will be administrative penalties for specific violations. There will be the ability to suspend or remove a registration if a company has shown itself to have an ongoing history of non-compliance or where there was false or misleading information provided.

There will be a public appeals process. All activities and facilities on the registry or with an approval would be published and searchable on the public information website. This would include details of the activity or facility and the conditions of operation.

The public appeals process for an activity or facility would follow the same process. Inquiries or complaints would be made to the local district office; the district office would confirm that the facility is operating within the conditions of the regulation; and if the facility is not compliant, a variety of compliance tools could be used, such as penalties, orders or tickets.

If the facility is operating within compliance but there are site-specific concerns, the director would have the ability to remove the activity from the registry to the environmental compliance approval stream.

And we are committed to continuing to consult with stakeholders and the public on the regulations that would set out what conditions an activity must meet to use the registry.

In particular, industry must remain in compliance with the regulations to protect the environment and public health. It is proposed that facilities that have a registration be required to declare on a regular basis that their registration is accurate. This ensures that registrations are maintained and that companies comply with the requirements of the regulation.

By implementing a modern approvals system with improved means of information management, Ontario would

have quicker access to technical information to support decision-making. Moving to multimedia approvals would provide more information on all emissions in a geographical area, which would ensure that the ministry is able to assess the cumulative effect of activities.

Some have asked how the eligibility criteria for the registry will be determined. We are working closely with stakeholders to build a modern approvals system that would enhance environmental protection while improving service delivery to business. Eligibility criteria outlined in the regulation for a given activity would be based on the evaluation of several factors, including the activity's risk to the environment and human health, and this may include a history of compliance. Ontario would consult with industry, environmental and other interested stakeholders to inform development of eligibility criteria in the regulations.

We will continue to have one-on-one and sector-based meetings. They have been ongoing, and they will continue.

However, if it is required and suspensions are applied to the registry, the suspensions from the registry would be subject to appeal through the Environmental Review Tribunal.

We think these processes are open, accountable, transparent and exactly what Ontario needs to move forward.

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We have had considerable endorsement of our approach. The member for Toronto–Danforth quoted some organizations. I would like to quote Bob Oliver, executive director of Pollution Probe, who said, "Pollution Probe supports Ontario's commitment to build a streamlined modern approval system that is good for business while protecting the environment. The proposed risk-based approach could help achieve this balance. Pollution Probe looks forward to ongoing consultation on this process." This certainly sounds like an endorsement to me.

Not surprisingly, business is impressed with what we are proposing. Alex Gill, executive director of the Ontario Environment Industry Association, said the following: "Ontario Environment Industry Association ... is supportive of the approach and specific proposals put forward by the Ministry of the Environment.... We have been calling for changes to the approvals process for some years."

Also, Adrianna Stech, manager of environment and sustainability for the Ontario Mining Association, has said, "To the mining community, the proposed framework for modernizing environmental approvals signifies a welcome move toward enhancing the business climate in the province on a par with other leading jurisdictions, while improving the efficiency and efficacy of environmental protection measures and ensuring worker health and safety."

So, it is clear that we have broad support for the way we intend to modernize our approval system.

I'd like to emphasize, in the short time I have remaining, that in fact this system will increase environmental protection by issuing multimedia and site-wide approvals instead of separate ones for air, water and waste. We will better be able to assess potential environmental impacts from an ecosystem perspective.

The online registry will provide far greater transparency. Anyone will be able to look up information about environmental approvals and registrations in their community, seeing where they are and the conditions that are in place.

The new process would require existing facilities with approvals issued decades ago to come back to the ministry for review. This will ensure that facilities are meeting today's stringent standards, not the ones that were in place decades ago when they first received their approvals.

The requirement for mandatory reviews would also be incorporated into new approvals, meaning that facilities would be required to come back to the ministry so we could ensure they are kept up to date with the best science and standards.

Right now, as I said before, all approvals, big or small, go through the exact same process. Changing a fan or an HVAC system goes through the same process as applying for a permit for a new steel plant. By using a risk-based approach, ministry staff could focus their efforts on those proposals that are more complex and pose a greater risk to the environment. Through electronic submissions, we would be better able to look at applications in the broader context of their location and get a better understanding of potential environmental impacts.

All in all, this is a very good step forward.

I was hoping to have time to talk about other initiatives, so in the last few seconds that I have—it isn't only, of course, the Ministry of the Environment that is looking at this kind of an approach of streamlining the approval process. The Ministry of Natural Resources is proposing amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act that would streamline the approval process, ensure greater consistency in permit decisions, and ease compliance obligations for business. These changes aim to address issues raised by the building and land development industry.

We must listen to business, but we must also always protect the public interest. We believe that with the Open for Business Act, we have struck the right balance. We are being prudent and we are ensuring environmental protection while making sure Ontario is open for business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I listened to the speech from my office, and I think they mean well. I think they certainly want to improve the environmental laws of this province.

However, I sat on a committee in Hamilton on the Taro landfill a few years ago. Trust me; you can have all the best intentions in the world, but if your environmental people are not ready to enforce their own rules and fine companies and go after them—they didn't. And not only that; we even had stuff brought in from Michigan that was hazardous material that was dumped above the

mountain in Hamilton in the Taro landfill because there was no enforcement. Inspectors would come out and check one in 1,000 loads coming into there. How can you screen stuff by doing one check on 1,000 trucks? And that was under both governments, Conservative and Liberal. They did nothing to improve the inspection of and the fines on companies, because they were afraid to fine the company because the company might pull out or lay people off. That's the real truth.

Until they can enforce the rules that they put in front of this Legislature and put out to the people, until they actually fine the companies for the pollution that's going on—look at what's happening in the Gulf right now. That's criminal. You can have all the best intentions, all the rules you want, but if you don't enforce them, if you don't get those inspectors out and fine these companies—and not a little tap on the hand, $5,000 or $10,000; that's chump change for them. You've got to hit them hard and hit them big so they don't do it again.

I'll tell you right now: Until they enforce the laws they put out, nothing is going to change.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: I certainly listened intently to the very fine presentation that was made by my colleague from Oak Ridges–Markham. The member, of course, is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment, but prior to coming here, she was a medical officer of health. What better person to spend some time to articulate the concept of having a science-based approach to these things—and I would note, during her professional career as a director of public health, that would be the basis on which she would make decisions in that role. She would have her staff come to her with a whole file of information on a particular issue that would be science-based, and as the medical officer of health for that region, she would make a decision based on that information. You can see how that very important philosophy was weaved very carefully through her presentation, talking about her role at the Ministry of the Environment and how we're going to be able to move forward when applications come forward.

She also talked about the Ministry of Labour's employment standards modernization strategy. She talked about the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and how they're going to be handling the Drainage Act down the road. She also talked about the Ministry of Transportation: Highway Traffic Act amendments would mean enhanced interprovincial truck movements, which would benefit Ontario's economy.

In a very short 20-minute space, she certainly packed an awful lot of information in her speech. Those viewers who are listening tonight will get the real impression that we want to open Ontario for business, and that's reflected in the GDP numbers that were released this morning.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I listened intently to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment. These are the same speeches that we were making 10 years ago when we were trying to modify the process with regard to environmental assessments and approving projects and those kinds of things.

It's unfortunate that in our province we do have people who make it more of a hobby to step in the way of progress and in fact are not that concerned about environmental issues but are more concerned with causing mischief. I had that situation in my own riding when we were trying to four-lane Highway 7 from Ottawa to Carleton Place. It's a project I announced when I was the Minister of Transportation. That project was put back by a year by a person who called themselves an environmentalist.

In fact, it had to do with moving the road about six feet—it was necessary for the Ministry of Transportation to do that because of a house that was going to be affected. That person thought they were very smart. They objected to it on the very last day for the objection, and that put the project off by a year. As a result, three people have perished on that road because of this environmentalist's interjection into the process and the putting back of that project.

That's why we need a reasonable process in terms of environmental assessment and environmental approvals. I look forward to the government putting forward a risk-based process as long as it's fair, reasonable and it is risk-based. Those projects which are in fact a great intrusion into the environment should have a longer and more in-depth approach, as opposed to smaller and less risky projects. That's what the Auditor General has supported in his reports as well.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Charles Sousa: I'm pleased to speak further on the bill, the Open for Business Act, and to reaffirm once again the importance that we place on putting a bill before the Legislature to enable businesses and others around the province to recognize that this jurisdiction is indeed stimulating economic growth, stimulating more investments in Ontario, and enabling people to feel assured that we're not sacrificing our environment by so doing.

What we want is to create jobs. For example, we've already partnered with various municipalities and other levels of government in situations like BizPaL, where we can facilitate those companies when they come to Ontario to establish themselves. We've also taken a number of initiatives to attract businesses from around the world to come to Ontario. That wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for these initiatives.

What's important is that we have now suffered through two years of some rather tragic economic situations around the globe, and yet Ontario, with its strong fundamentals, has been able to weather them effectively. We've often heard that there are situations where the financial community isn't supporting small business, and yet in Ontario there's more access to funds than there is

in any other part of the world when it comes to traditional services. That, again, wouldn't be possible if we as a government and we as a province didn't make it an attractive place for them to do business.

I encourage all members in the House to support this bill as a strong indication that we in Ontario support business, we support our consumers, we support working families and we support our environment.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Oak Ridges–Markham, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to thank the members for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Peterborough, Carleton–Mississippi Mills and Mississauga South for their comments in relation to my remarks.

I think it's very interesting as we go through this debate. We each come to this place with our own perspective, our own background. Certainly, the reason I chose to seek elected office was the tragedy of Walkerton. I know that I never want to see an Ontario where environmental protection is not an absolute, strong value held by the government.

That's why I feel so confident that what we are doing is certainly going to enhance environmental protection. What we're looking at with the strengthened compliance requirements for more complex applications is from an ecosystem perspective. We are going to be regulating environmental standards for businesses that have not had their certificate of approval reviewed in a very long time. So there's going to be a level playing field for business. And we have consulted widely.

I think what we've achieved with this is stimulation of the business community. They will save time, they will save money, and our environment will in fact be even more protected with what we are doing.

This is only one aspect of this particular bill. I know that as we go forward we will hear many of the other issues that are also addressed.

I urge everyone to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I'm glad to have a bit of time to speak on Bill 68.

You're talking about opening doors and closing doors. There are some people out on the lawn tonight who think that maybe you're closing the doors, and it has something to do with the labour part of this bill. They're called "Sleepless at Queen's Park." "Why are we here?" the sleepless say. Well, their benefits are once again under attack. In the name of the unfunded liability, the Auditor General has recommended reducing injured workers' benefits. That doesn't sound like opening the door and bringing people in; not to me. The WSIB says, "Yes, reduce these benefits." Now, isn't that a great thing? The WSIB, I believe, is under the control of this government. Maybe they've lost control of it; I'm not sure. This means more poverty for injured workers. They're already suffering too much. This means less coverage for their medication. This means reduction of their medical treatments. This means returning to work faster, when they are not well. This does not sound like opening doors to me. This means more reinjuries. This means more injured workers living in poverty and on the streets.

What happened to the historical compromise? This is the foundation of our compensation system. Sir William Meredith said, "Compensation for as long as the disability lasts." Injured workers gave up their right to sue for fair compensation and for a just compensation system.

I think everybody in this House should go outside and talk to these injured workers, so I'll move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Murdoch has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1947 to 2017.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Murdoch has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 7; the nays are 32.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Further debate?

Mr. Bill Murdoch: Were we even close on that one, Mr. Speaker?

We did adjourn the debate, not to finish the debate—we're going to work on that now—but so that all parties could go out and talk to the people on the lawn, the people from working families, about how we're opening the doors, but then we close them when they get inside and lock them in there. I didn't see any of you guys out there other than—my friend from Sarnia was out with me. There were some NDP, and I think some of these other people were out there, but I didn't see a person from the government there. I don't know what happened.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Liberals don't consult.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: This was a chance to consult. I believe the speaker earlier tonight was going on about consulting. Well, here is a chance. They're right out on the lawn—some people from working families.

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I didn't see you out there, though. I understand that.

There was a study done on the economic and social impacts of workplace injury and illness. Some key findings: 61% of injured workers surveyed were unemployed after injury, while 89% were employed full-time prior to injury.

You won't know these things unless you go out and talk to them and consult. Well, I guess I'm going to have to tell you.

The poverty rate amongst injured workers was two to four times higher than the general population of Ontario. Nearly one in five injured workers—18%—was on social assistance. About 20% of respondents lost their home after injury—and we're supposed to be opening the door with this bill. One in five injured workers was living in extreme poverty after injury—less than $10,000 in income per year. Some 41% of injured workers reported an income of less than $15,000.

One in five injured workers no longer had a car after injury—but we're going to open the doors. Maybe we're going to give them cars—are we? I think we bailed out the car industry. Maybe if we own some of those cars we can do that.

The findings indicate a thirteenfold increase in food bank use post-injury. Sixty-four respondents reported that they had used food banks after injury, compared to five who reported having used food banks before their injury. That is startling.

The incidence of subsidized housing use more than doubled after injury. Twenty-five respondents reported using subsidized housing after injury, compared with 12 before.

Almost half, 46%, of injured workers reported depression as a result of their workplace injury. Two thirds of injured workers reported losing friends as a result of workplace injury, while 18% reported they had lost their family.

These people are out on the front lawn. They're going to stay there tonight so that you people, the government, can go out and consult with them.

I believe people need a second chance, so what I'm prepared to do is call for adjournment of the House so that the government of the day can go out and talk to these people on the lawn. I call for adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Murdoch has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2022 to 2052.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Murdoch has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 6; the nays are 31.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Further debate?

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I don't know what more I can do to help the government out when they mentioned that they wanted to consult. They've made many speeches in here over the last six, seven years that they'd like to consult. I gave them a chance to consult, and I didn't notice any of you out there again. The people who are sleepless and are going to spend the night out there will be here tomorrow, so I'm sure that any of you—

Interjections.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: There seem to be many people who want to get in on this. We may be here all night debating this, because it sounds like a lot of people on the other side would like to say—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'll help the member by asking for order.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I guess this is one of these midnight shifts that we're doing. Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether you've ever worked in industry, but I've had to do this before. We used to have a shift from 4 o'clock until midnight. I guess we're getting into shift work, so you can't say that we don't understand how some people have to work at night. But I just wonder how much we're getting done here. We are debating Bill 68.

I want to again, though, mention that we did go outside—my good friend from Sarnia was right there with me all the way—and there are some really serious concerns, and there are concerns about this bill all through the people of Ontario. They are certainly concerned. Some people would say this—now, I really wouldn't. It's not a bad word, I don't think, but it is "pathetic." It's not a word that I use a lot, but it is pathetic that it took almost seven years in office for the McGuinty government to finally introduce a red tape reduction act, and then they won't call it.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Remember Walkerton.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: What was that again, sir?

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Remember Walkerton. You cut the red tape.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: There's a gentleman over there who wants to talk about Walkerton. I'd love to talk about Walkerton. I'm glad he opened that up. Now you might have to keep me here.

Walkerton was—

Hon. Monique M. Smith: You've got 11 minutes to finish off.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: It's bad enough having a whip in my own government; now I have one from the opposition telling me how long I've got to speak. I've been well whipped here tonight. I do appreciate her concern, because she actually has been good to me—I guess she's not a whip; she's a House leader—when I sat as an independent.

But we have to get back to this Walkerton thing. The member wants to talk about that. He wants to talk about the two drunks who didn't do their jobs. I wonder if he knew them or not. I don't know; maybe he did. They were two people who didn't do their jobs. It wouldn't have mattered if we'd had hundreds of people working for the government; they never would have caught this when the reports were falsified by two people who didn't know what they were doing. They obviously had a problem, and they drank a little too much. Unfortunately, this thing happened, and no one liked to see it happen, but

two people caused this. The people of Walkerton know that. But you get these other people—and I'm proud of the fact that I represented Walkerton. Actually, I won in Walkerton after the tragedy. It's unfortunate that we even had a tragedy.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Would the speaker take his seat?

I don't know what's so difficult to understand—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Take your seat just for a minute.

I don't know what's so difficult to understand about the word "order," but I'd like to have some.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Oh yeah? Okay.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Oh, yes, Minister, I would like to have some.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate that you bring some order to the House, because they're getting carried away a bit here. I guess it's unfortunate that they didn't live in Walkerton. I live up there. I know exactly what happened. I was there. It was a tragedy, there's no doubt, but it's not the way some people like to portray it. Maybe some of these people who like to do a lot of talking and yelling about it should go and talk to some of the people who actually live in Walkerton. They would like them to come and talk to them and maybe consult. It's called "consulting." It's easy to go and blame the government.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: They wouldn't even go out on the lawn.

Mr. Robert Bailey: If they won't go on the lawn, they won't go to Walkerton.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I guess not. We have people out on the lawn right now who are upset with the government. Maybe they should go there and speak to them first.

But we can talk about Walkerton all you want, and what really happened there. As I said, again, when two people falsify a report, it wouldn't matter how many government people you had working for you, because they're going to look at that report. Those people were in charge and they said there was no problem, so things did happen, which is unfortunate. But if you really want to know what happened, the thing would be to go there. Go there and see. You always say, "The next election will prove that you were wrong." You know something? In the next election, they did vote for me. I don't know why, because the gentleman across the way is saying that it was all my fault or something. The people up there knew that there was a problem. What happened? They really did know what happened.

You have the government of the day wanting to blame something in the past. You have the media that'll always be on this. If I was a member of the government, I would be very careful of what I might say right now because the media just loves to jump on you. So they would want to be pretty careful of what they do say because if they ever get on the wrong side of the media, they'll be in a bit of trouble, and with this bill it looks like they are, because what are we doing opening the door again? The horse is out, and we're trying to bring it back in. This open-door thing—I have no understanding of what they're trying to do.

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Right now they want to ruin rural Ontario and northern Ontario; that's what they want to do. They get down here to Toronto, they look and they've got one windmill, yet you can put hundreds out in rural Ontario, and who cares? This government says, "But we will decide. We will not let the local people decide where you're going to put wind farms. No, no. We're go to keep the door closed on that one." That doesn't sound much like an open-door policy to me over here when you tell people in the rest of Ontario, especially rural and northern Ontario, "You will do what we tell you to do down here, not what you might want to do."

It does seem rather odd—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I sure hope that gentleman gets a chance to speak today, because he certainly has a lot to say.

Mr. Robert Bailey: He's feeling restrained.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: Well, I guess so. Maybe his House leader has told him to be quiet. You never know.

Anyway, we get into this open-door thing again. We've got a government that says, "Hey, we know best, and we'll tell you where you'll put the wind farms. You don't get a chance to even choose where you want them. It may be good." That does not sound like an open-door policy to me. That's closed. "We will decide. We are better. We know where it's going to go." They're doing it to rural Ontario all over, and northern Ontario. They're telling them what to do.

Interjection: The Oakville power plant.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: Yes, the Oakville power plant.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I have looked very carefully in the bill under discussion, and pursuant to standing order 23(b)(i), I can't find a single reference in it to windmills. Perhaps the member would like to address the topic of the bill under discussion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I understand the point of order the member is trying to make, but the bill title talks about open doors and business, from what I have heard. Therefore, I'll keep a very close ear to see that we keep on the debate issue.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly appreciate that, because that's what we're talking about. You're exactly right. You mention something, and what does the government of the day do? They shut the door. "Don't let them talk about it. We don't want them to talk about that. No, that might be something that's true, mightn't it?" Nice try over there. Nice try to close the door again.

"It's an open-door policy." That's what you say it is, and I don't know why you don't stick to that, but you

don't. You say you're going to open the door, and then you close it and everything.

I'll go back to the wind farms. You've closed anything anybody has to say about it other than your cabinet and your Premier, which will decide—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Probably not all of cabinet.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: Well, no. I'm not sure all of cabinet gets to say anything. If it's like anything else, the Premier decides what's going to happen, and he, in his wisdom, has decided that rural Ontario will have wind farms whether they like them or not, whether they work or not. They don't even know whether they hurt people or not. They don't know that.

Mr. Robert Bailey: They don't want to know.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: That's for sure. They don't want to know. Then, they want to pay huge amounts for this.

I know that the members from northern Ontario are upset with this, but they get clamped, shot down again. I wonder where the rural members are when it comes to this open-door policy. Have you put those people in a closet, closed the door and said, "Don't come out until we get this passed"? Because I can't believe there isn't somebody over there from rural Ontario who will stand up and say, "There's something wrong with this bill. There's something wrong with what we're doing over here altogether. We're not opening the door for policies. We're not doing that."

I'm surprised and almost appalled that some members of the government would stand up and even say that we're talking about something we shouldn't be. They should be with open arms because they talk about open doors. They should be happy to hear a debate in here about something. Maybe it might just trigger something—that maybe they are doing something wrong. Everybody has a chance to do that, you know. Until we stand up in this House and start thinking for ourselves, nothing will change.

Now, we're no better than you are over here when it comes to that, but until this House starts to speak for themselves—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: No, I'll tell you like it is, if you want to talk about it.

You have a Premier, we have leaders, and you might as well let the three of them sit here. Maybe nothing will happen, but they will run the show.

You are told how to vote. I'll be very surprised if one of you doesn't stand up and vote against this—you should. You'll be told what to do because the Premier wants this. That's the open-door policy here.

You talk about an open-door policy. We don't have an open-door policy in this House, and you know it. You can sit there and look down at the floor and things like that, but you know that you're told how to vote and you come in here and you vote that way. It's not only your party. They all do that, and it's wrong.

We don't have real democracy in this country. Until we get back to a representative democracy, which it was meant to be in the first place—we don't have that. That would be an open-door policy. Think about it. You could vote the way you wanted, not the way you're told to vote. And it would work over on this side, too. But when is that ever going to happen? Well, it starts with you guys, because you're the government, you're the majority. When you start to speak out against things that happen in your ridings, this will be a much better place. Until you do that—you can talk about all the open-door policies, closed doors, whatever the heck you want—there will be one person in this place who decides what we're going to do, and that's the Premier of the day, whoever it is. Unfortunately, that's not right.

There are 107 of us who got elected. There should be 107 free votes in this place all the time. That's the way it should be, but unfortunately it isn't that way because we don't have an open-door policy here. It goes back to this bill. And when somebody tries to say something different, you get somebody over there who gets all upset about it. But who told you to get upset? Did that come from the Premier's office too? "Don't let them talk about democracy. Don't talk about open-door policy, because we really don't have that. We just like to let on we do."

I appreciate the time I've had to speak on this bill—

Mr. Ted McMeekin: So do we.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: —and some of them over there, maybe.

I'm sure a lot of members over on that side and on this side would like that too, but unfortunately this place isn't opened up yet to an open-door policy. When that happens someday, I hope that some of you are here to be able to vote the way you want to vote, not the way you're told to vote. I hope someday that happens. Then, we'll have true democracy in this place. Until that happens, we will never have it.

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: There's a member who was in Ottawa, and I'm sure she had an open-door policy up there. I'm sure Chrétien let you say whatever you wanted. That's why you're here—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: It is indeed a pleasure and an honour to sit here some nights and listen to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound as he pontificates. He has these home truths. He says things that I think others are afraid to talk about in this House, and one of those is that he feels that he has a duty and an obligation to stand up and speak on behalf of the people he represents in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

I know he has been stuck there in the corner for a while because his caucus kicked him out—I remember that—and then they invited him back. But the reason he was in that corner is that he has never stopped speaking for the people he represents, and he has never stopped saying things that he thinks they want to hear and that they agree with.

Earlier this year, I was a called to a couple of television stations to talk about the divorce of Toronto from the rest of Ontario, and it was his idea. I'm not sure that

all the people he represents like the idea, but I'm sure that some of them do.

He talked about things that he feels passionately about. I'm not sure how they were involved with the bill itself. But he did talk about things that I know really are important to the people he represents. He talked about the massive wind farms that are in his riding. He talked about Walkerton. I know that Walkerton was a tragedy, and he knows that Walkerton was a tragedy. I know and he knows that the government was culpable to some degree on it. But he is also right that there were a couple of people there who didn't do their job right.

The people in his riding did not punish him when the Conservatives went out in a tide. He was not swept out with that tide. He was elected twice again because I do think that he speaks his mind on behalf of his constituents, and for all of that we should say bravo to him.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: To the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound: Bravo.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to echo the comments from the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. I did attend with him and a number of the people who are demonstrating out on the lawn, and they did speak to the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and myself about their concerns. I understand why the member offered those two opportunities for the members of the House to go out and to consult. As they like to say, they like to over-consult sometimes.

In his remarks, he talked about what will make Ontario any better: If we have more and more regulations? All the regulations in the world, as the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound said, wouldn't have made any difference in Walkerton if people didn't do their jobs at the end of the day. There's a certain amount of responsibility that has to take place. People have to do what's right. They have to do their job.

Also, with the wind farms, he talked about the opportunities for people in rural Ontario to comment on the intrusions on rural Ontario. I hear from people all the time in my riding—farmers, people in the urban areas who are going to be impacted—and I know the rest of the members in the House do as well. I know they must. They don't just come to my riding and give petitions to me and make phone calls. I get emails all the time. I can certainly echo what the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound says about how rural Ontario feels that they're not being listened to, that they don't have that voice in the government around the cabinet table, that these windmills, for example, are being foisted upon them with no opportunity to have recourse because of the Green Energy Act.

There are over 500,000 regulations, as I understand it, at last count in the province of Ontario. I don't think Bill 68 is going to do anything. We talk about this open-door policy; I think it's an open-and-shut case. That's not going to be the case. Thank you for the opportunity to respond, and I commend the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Open for Business really is about being open for the opportunities that families, our children and our grandchildren need for today and in the future. It's about making sure that we can provide in the future what many of us have been able to take for granted in the past. I can't imagine why we're spending so much time criticizing what is essentially a very simple proposition: to make sure that everybody who would like one has a job and an opportunity by opening ourselves up to the world.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I want to thank everyone who spoke. I know they feel passionate about different things here. The member from Beaches–East York: We've been at some things together and we certainly enjoyed that. The member from North Bay, as I say, tries to keep me on track here, too, so I appreciate that sometimes and I consider her a friend. The member from Sarnia–Lambton: Of course, we've been friends for a long time and I appreciate what he had to say. The member from London: That's my daughter's riding, so I'll call it my daughter's riding because he represents my daughter, and she tries to keep him on the straight and narrow, but it's tough sometimes.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: She's a good person.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: That's nice to hear.

The whole thing is, we're here and sitting until midnight. Are we really accomplishing a lot? I guess some people think we are and some don't. I go back to what I really passionately feel, though, in this whole House: If we wanted it to work, it would work so much better if we were all individuals in here. I don't mind the party system too—it has to be there—but it would be nice if the party system was just what it's called but didn't run this House. It does run this House. We have a party democracy. We do not have representative democracy, which we should have. It's unfortunate we don't have that. Everybody just follows their party's lines. I know there are things sometimes that I may think you're doing right, and I should be able to stand up here and say that. I'm sure there are times over there when you think, "Why are we doing this?" but don't speak out because you'll end up outside or in the corner or something like that.

We need to change this House somehow and I don't know how to go about it. If any of you have ideas, work on that because it'll never be right unless we change it to have representative democracy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to the standing orders, there having been at least six and a half hours of debate on this bill, the debate is deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: No further debate on this bill.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations, the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and at 6:45 p.m., on Tuesday, June 1, 2010 for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 1 p.m. on Tuesday, June 1, 2010. At 8 p.m. on that day, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, June 2, 2010. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, on the day the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That there shall be no deferral of the third reading vote allowed pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I would just like to say a few things with respect to the time allocation motion with respect to Bill 46, the so-called Excellent Care for All Act, which was really introduced in this Legislature with startling speed. I recall just having a briefing on it on a Monday afternoon and speaking to it on the Tuesday morning.

As far as a lot of stakeholders are concerned, this bill is going to be passed through this Legislature by the time we finish sitting, if in fact the House rises on June 3, as we suspect it will, without a lot of the stakeholders even knowing that a bill was brought forward. There has been said to be a lot of consultation with respect to this bill, but frankly I don't think a lot of stakeholders or members of the public of Ontario even know what this bill contains. We have done our best to try and inform stakeholders, but there was only one day that was set for committee hearings with respect to this bill. We had about 10 or 12 organizations that came forward, a couple of individuals, but I think that it was the not fact that there was not that much interest in it, but really the fact that a lot of people didn't even know that it was coming forward.

We heard some really interesting suggestions with respect to this bill, and when you're talking about Open Ontario, opening opportunities, as the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound indicated in his previous comments before this House, what we really should be talking about is giving every member in this House the opportunity to vote as they see fit, as their constituents are telling them how they want to see voting on these sorts of bills. But the fact of the matter is, there we were in committee with this bill. Ten or 12 good suggestions came forward—actually a number—and we put forward a whole package of amendments that we will be introducing during the clause-by-clause discussion of this bill tomorrow afternoon, and perhaps into the evening.

Some of the suggestions that were made, which included the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, suggested that we should be opening up hospitals, as part of the MUSH sector, to review by the Ombudsman of Ontario—I certainly would support that—and to freedom-of-information requests, and to open it up so that the public and members of this Legislature can know how monies are being spent exactly and can have that kind of public scrutiny that I think we all want to see happen. But the fact of the matter is that we don't have that. I suspect that's not going to be something that this House and members of the committee are going to see fit to accept, because they will be basically told not to. I don't think that's a good thing, because we did have some very knowledgeable people who did come forward.

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We also had some members from the Ontario Hospital Association come forward. They made the suggestion that some of the surveys that are going to be done as part of the continuous quality improvement in hospitals and other health care organizations that's going to be happening—which I think is a good thing. They're suggesting, however, that some of the employee surveys should only be done on a biennial basis, that we shouldn't do it annually because it is very time-consuming, and by the time you would implement a plan that the employees would be able to work through, you'd be running up against another survey. So it doesn't really seem to be time-effective or resource-effective to be able to do that. I do hope the government will take heed of that amendment, and we'll have to see what amendments come forward from the

government side of the House when we go into the clause-by-clause review of this bill come tomorrow.

We also heard from some of the other organizations. Principally, I would say the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario brought forward a number of very good suggestions for amendment with respect to Bill 46 that I think should be given considerable weight by this government, especially because the nurses have done a lot of work on evidence-based clinical practices for nurses and nurse practitioners. That's part of what this bill is aimed at dealing with, to bring in best practices across the province of Ontario through the quality health council. Again, I think that's a good thing. But we really should be listening more to what the RNAO has to say in this matter. They've also brought forward some suggestions regarding, in addition to best practices, that there should be some changes with respect to the composition of some of the committees in the hospitals, that they be more representative not just of physicians who are practising in the hospitals but also represent all of the health care professionals—and not just nurses, I should say here, but you should have represented the other health care professionals who practise in the hospital so that all of the voices will be heard around the table and the proportion of other health care professionals who are allowed on these committees will be in proportion to the number of people in that particular practice who are practising in health care organizations.

There was also a suggestion that some of the these practices that are being implemented shouldn't just be in public hospitals, they should be in all health care organizations. I think that would make sense. That was brought forward by the chiropractors' association of Ontario. They suggested that if we're looking at best-quality health care across the board, we shouldn't simply be looking at public hospitals. There are many other health care organizations and also some suppliers of health care services that are currently not funded through our health care system but perhaps should be, such as chiropractic services, which are no longer listed under OHIP. There is some suggestion that there are other organizations that should be represented here and that we should expand the net if you're looking at developing quality-based health care principles across the board.

There were a lot of suggestions that were brought forward. I hope that we will have an opportunity to have a fulsome discussion when we do get into clause-by-clause discussion of this bill tomorrow. Because this bill has been time-allocated, that appears to be one of the few opportunities that we have left for a full discussion on this issue. It is certainly my hope that we will use the time wisely, that the government members will be amenable to suggestions for amendments and that we will be able to have that full discussion so that we will actually be able to achieve excellent care for all in Ontario and not just say it in the title of the bill. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate.

Mr. Michael Prue: I'm not standing up here on the bill; I'm standing up here on the entire process. I remember when the Liberals were in opposition. I remember what they would say if a horrendous thing like this was done by the Harris or the Eves government.

This is a bill that only came to this House a couple of weeks ago. This is a bill that was ramrodded through with one tiny afternoon of public hearings that were only announced the day before, so that nobody had an opportunity to show up. This is a bill that hasn't had any real debate in this House. This is the bill where the government House leader stands up and reads off regulation after regulation after regulation, how each and every member of this House has to act: There shall be only five minutes of debate. There shall be this happening, then the government shall do this, then the opposition can't stand up and speak; the members of the Legislature can't stand up and speak, and if it does go to committee, it can only happen for a few minutes—and on and on and on it goes.

Why are you people here? Why were you elected, to do this? To stand here and take this? Because that's what each one of you are doing. You're standing there and saying, "I am useless at my job because I don't have anything to do except to stay here until midnight and vote yes to whatever my government House leader says."

I think that this is an affront to this House, this is an affront to democracy, this is an affront to this Legislature to stand here—and I don't even have a copy. I wish I did, because I think I'd like to frame this motion; I would like to frame it and put it on the wall so that if anybody wants to run for the Legislature, I'll just show them exactly what happens here to a government that doesn't want to hear anything, doesn't want to debate anything, doesn't want to even let its own members speak to the bill, doesn't want to have any committee hearings and is ensuring that the Speaker is neutered so that everything has to be called and is deemed to be passed if any questions are asked.

What are you doing here? Why are you here? Are you going to stand up when the next election comes, those of you who are going to run again, and talk about this very proud day in the Legislature, what a good job you and your party have done, how you've introduced a bill that nobody has had a chance to look at or to talk about, how you introduced a motion at 10 o'clock at night that doesn't allow anybody to do anything with it at all?

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Sorry, 9:30. I was getting a little ahead of myself.

This is what's happening. I'm standing up not to talk about the bill, the merits of the bill—I'm going to leave that to my colleague from Nickel Belt—but I am standing here to tell you that I feel ashamed. I hope most of you feel ashamed for what is happening here today, because this is not why I ran in the election and I'm sure it's not why you ran in the election. I'm sure that the Minister of Health, who desperately wants this bill to be passed, is not very happy at the way it is being rammed through this House.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm thrilled. I couldn't be happier. Look at this.

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes, oh, she couldn't be happier. I guess if you get what you want and I guess if it's all forced through, you can be happy. But for the rest of us, please, please, think about what's happening here, because this is not—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Will the speaker please take his seat?

The member for Sarnia–Lambton may wish to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Withdrawn.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you. I wish I had heard it. I'll bet you it was a good one.

Anyway, that's really the nub of what I have to say. I feel quite ashamed for this House, for this process, for the things that people have fought and died for, for the things of our tradition and our parliamentary democracy. To see it reduced to such trivia at a time like this.

I don't know how important the bill is, because it seems to me like a pretty routine bill, but it is, in fact, something that we all should have had an opportunity to read, to digest and to look at. Any time that any government does what you are doing, then that takes away a great deal from this House and from the members who were elected to serve it.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

M^me^ France Gélinas: I, too, have a little bit of a problem with this bill. It was introduced on May 3. That was a Monday. A few days later, we had done second reading. On May 20, four days after they were announced, we held hearings. Then we were off for a week, and the first day back, at 9 o'clock at night, we're going for a motion for time allocation. I don't understand this process—why, all of a sudden, everything seems to be rushed.

We don't disagree with the intention of the bill; it's not a bill that is very contentious. But are there opportunities to make it better? Absolutely. I have started to work on a number of amendments which I hope everybody will consider at their face value, and I hope that I am able to contribute to the debate and make this bill even stronger. In order for this to happen, debate has to take place, and when we hear those time allocation motions coming and you have 40 minutes to spit out everything you have to say about this bill, it seems like the process is set up so we don't have a chance to be heard.

Bill 46 is called An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations. It has been called the Excellent Care for All Act. I would say that every Ontarian and health care worker wants quality throughout our health care system, and this is basically at the bottom of what this bill is trying to do. It is trying to put a quality lens on our health care system—mainly focused on hospitals as a start, I may add.

This is something new to some hospitals. It is something that has existed in other hospitals for a long time, but it is now something that the province will be doing province-wide on an equitable basis and through the introduction of this bill—nothing, as I say, that anybody would disagree with, but as is often the case, the devil is in the details, and in order to get to the details, you have to have time to talk about the bill.

There's not a whole lot in the bill, although it has a rather catchy name. Don't we have an obligation to act upon the recommendations of the few people who have had time to come and talk to the bill? Mind you, I must say that quite a few more managed to meet the deadline for written submissions, but very few actually were able to meet the deadline to come and present on Thursday. I can tell you that for people from the north it would have been physically impossible to come and make a deputation in time because the timeline to speak to this bill was so short. Some of them did manage to send in a written proposal, but unless we have time to put on the record what those people have put in their written requests and written proposals, how will Ontarians ever know? How could they really influence this bill to make it a better bill? They took this really short time frame that was given to them and responded in writing because they didn't have time to drive down here to meet the deadline. And now, in 40 minutes, it will all be finished and done with.

To speak more specifically about the bill, the bill is a broad stroke. It gives us a tendency as to where the government wants to go and then it says that everything else will be in the regulations. To me, the bill needs to have a little bit more definition because we know that once we're into regulations, the opposition, anyway, has very little influence on this process.

The bill is centred around producing quality health care, which will include setting targets, measuring outcomes and reporting on these assessments. One of the main things that I would like to see in the bill is a definition of what "quality" means. There's no definition of "quality" in this bill. Although the bill is all about providing quality care and taking this quality lens to improve our health care, there's no definition. To me, this is a big part missing, and the few deputants who were there spoke about it. The people who were able to write and phone would certainly like to see this definition put into the bill and not left in regulation, where there is no guarantee that they will have an opportunity to be part of that process.

There are also huge issues with this bill when it comes to transparency. The two main ones are Ombudsman oversight and the inclusion of hospital and other health care institutions under the freedom-of-access-to-information legislation. The NDP has put forward private members' bills many, many times before. Our leader, Andrea Horwath, was the last one to do so, where she wants—and we all want—Ombudsman oversight of our hospitals and other health care institutions.

Did you know that we are the only province in Canada that does not give their Ombudsman oversight over hospitals? This means that if somebody is not satisfied with the services they get, they will go through the complaint mechanism of the hospital, and the hospital will do its best to answer the questions of the clients and the patients and their families. Most of them do a good job of this, but sometimes they don't. When they don't, people pick up the phone and phone the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman gets hundreds of calls from people who have exhausted the internal process of the hospital and didn't get satisfaction, so they turned to the Ombudsman. But the only thing the Ombudsman can say is, "I'm sorry; the government has not given me oversight of hospitals." In his reports for many years now he has said that this has to be changed. We have opened this bill that will modify the hospitals act. What a perfect time to change this. It is not in the bill right now but is certainly something that we would like to see.

Many groups also talk about specific issues of their groups. The first one I would like to talk about are the midwives. The midwives are a relatively new profession in Ontario, although they've existed since there have been human beings. Women have always had midwives help them deliver their babies. In Ontario, they have been recognized and regulated as a health profession only for the last decade or so—actually, they celebrated their 10th anniversary last year, if I remember well. They were one of the groups that managed to get in here, a little bit late actually, but they managed to come and do their presentation. Basically, they are worried about this bill.

The first point that they pointed to was that they're afraid that under the auspices of quality care, hospitals may choose to close down birthing units because of the new funding model that, here again, is hinted at, but certainly nobody has any details. But here again, through a little bit of a taste of what's to come in regulations, there was enough to make the midwives worry. They are concerned about the closure of birthing units because they know that it is already happening in Ontario.

It is very hard for any hospital to maximize the utility of a birthing unit. It is not like a surgical suite, where you know a hip replacement will take you an hour and a half, a knee replacement you can do in an hour, you book them back to back and you maximize. Babies are not like this. They come in due time, in their own time, so that means that it doesn't matter what you do, you will always have downtime in your birthing units and you will have times where you have babies coming out of everywhere. Actually, they all come out of the same place, but they all come at the same time.

Laughter.

M^me^ France Gélinas: Sorry about that. The point I was making is that it is not the type of service that a hospital can maximize. There will always be downtime. When you try to get value for money out of a birthing unit, it is not a money-maker. The midwives feel that with this new push for quality, birthing units will continue to be closed, and that will be very detrimental to their model of care.

They also are worried about the role of the Ontario Health Quality Council in developing clinical guidelines. Here is just a bit of their brief on this issue. They say that the Ontario midwives have reservations about the development of clinical practice guidelines.

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"Each health care profession should be able to establish and rely upon its own clinical practical guidelines, based on the best available evidence and in consultation with its own practitioners. For example, as experts in low-risk pregnancies, it is midwives who should—and indeed do—develop clinical practice guidelines for their own profession that benefit midwifery clients"—that is, pregnant moms, their babies and their families.

"Midwives support an approach to clinical practical guidelines that reflects all of the values of informed choice: the woman as a primary decision-maker, choice of birthplace, diversity and appropriate use of technology. Using this approach, clinical practice guidelines and adapted protocols are the application of evidence in context; it is the integration of clinical expertise, physiologic knowledge, patient preferences, clinical findings, the woman's and family's goals, values, social context, geographic location, cultural, legal and community factors." All of this put together will specifically develop the midwifery model of care that is not necessarily universal but focused on local needs.

So they're worried that the Ontario Health Quality Council could act and basically make it one-size-fits-all, no matter where you are. They want, instead, the Ontario Health Quality Council to act as a clearinghouse and promote the use of clinical practice guidelines, but they want to ensure that the act does not take away from the excellent quality and client experience with the midwifery model.

This is an important issue for midwives who have had a really tough time gaining acceptance within the health care system. I can tell you stories of our own hospital—at the time it was the Sudbury General Hospital; it is now part of Sudbury Regional Hospital—that when the midwives first went there, they were barely tolerated. They were allowed to use one of the birthing rooms. It was not much of a room, really; it was a room that nobody wanted to use. They had to do their own set-up. They had to change their own sheets. They had to clean the whole place after, because the hospital wouldn't support them in anything that they did. So the midwives arrived with a history of having to fight for every right that they've gained for the women, the babies and the families that they work with. Now we're talking about a model of integrated, interdisciplinary care where the tiny steps they have made for their own profession could be wiped out in a couple of words on a piece of paper. This is very worrisome to the midwives, and they would like to make sure that amendments are made to the bill so that they, like every other professional, have an opportunity to thrive and that women, babies and families have an opportunity

to take advantage of the excellent service that the midwives have been providing to the people of Ontario.

Nurses also had an opportunity to come, and they have a number of general concerns. The main issues that were raised by nurses are about equal representation on the medical boards and advisory committees, as well as the new quality committee. Did you know that we have medical advisory committees in hospitals and only physicians can sit on those committees? Nurses and a series of other health care professionals that practise in hospitals have all asked to make this an interdisciplinary committee rather than solely a medical advisory committee.

The bill is open. It is our opportunity to make some changes that have been needed for a long time. When we changed the scope of practice in Bill 179, many professionals came forward and asked that the medical advisory committee be changed. All of those amendments were ruled out of order because we were not looking at the laws for Ontario hospitals. Well, we are now. Now is the time. We were told that this couldn't be done because it didn't have to do with the hospitals act. Well, we are talking about the hospitals act. Wouldn't that be a good time to make those changes? I think it would be, but in order for this to happen, we have to have this discussion. We have to have a chance to bring those amendments forward.

The government still has not dealt with many of the fundamental issues that would ensure that nurses are recognized and permitted to act within their full scope of practice. For example, there is the interdisciplinary advisory committee, rather than the medical advisory committee. A lot of this has to do with nurse practitioners. Nurse practitioners still don't have the right to admit or discharge someone from a hospital because the laws governing hospitals in Ontario do not allow them to do this. We are modifying this law. What a good opportunity to get that done so that nurse practitioners get an opportunity to work within their full scope of practice.

Here again, those are amendments that need time to explain, to discuss, and maybe through the clause-by-clause, once we get there, we can get that done. But when you rush things through, then there is a tendency for expediency, to not take the time to go to the bottom of those issues, to not listen to what is presented but just hope that the clause-by-clause will go by fast so you can vote all those down and you can be done with it. To me, this is not doing a good service to the people of Ontario. Those issues have been brought forward a number of times. We're now talking about the hospitals act. It is time to act.

The nurses are also worried about the failure of this bill in terms of leaving too much to regulation. This is a theme that you will hear over and over from everybody who presented, everybody who sent in written submissions, as well as everybody who phoned in. Everybody is worried that the bill really only gives you broad strokes: "We are making this shift toward quality and it will be good and it will be happy and all of this." But really, people want to know more so they can have their own judgment as to whether this bill will be good or not, and they won't have an opportunity to do this.

I can quote directly from the nurses. They say, "It is difficult to comment on setting up quality committees in hospitals when what constitutes quality is not defined"—it's not the first time you've heard this; people want "quality" defined—"and the membership, composition and governance of quality committees are to be developed in regulations"—so you don't really know if nurses will be part of this because it's not in the bill; it will be in regulation—"as are additional responsibilities for quality committees, but these additional responsibilities would not be subject to a public consultation process."

They are worried about section 4(4), which provides for quality committees "'to oversee the preparation of annual quality improvement plans.' The objectives of quality improvement plans are not defined." Everybody has the same worry, that under the auspices of quality, you will see the argument for decreased access to care, and the nurses—the front-line workers—are worried about this. They say this is a serious concern among many groups, including the nurses, that the quality reporting will be a way to justify a cut in services. They go on to justify where those worries come from.

I'll quote a little bit from them:

"However, we are concerned that the LHINs have been using the language of hospital improvement plans to justify clinical service reductions in hospitals, not based on evidence-based clinical decisions or on improving quality, but in order to reduce expenditures in hospitals and to force hospitals to balance their budgets."

They, like many other groups, "want to be assured that quality committees will indeed be concerned with quality care, not solely the cost of care. We also believe that quality improvement plans should require review of patient and worker health and safety performance. We recommend that Bill 46 provide clear definitions regarding the objectives of quality improvement plans and prohibitions be set out for hospitals and quality committees from using quality improvement plans to justify cuts to hospital clinical services and front-line clinical positions."

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The nurses are worried. There is enough of a direction in there to lead one to believe that quality—which everybody will agree with; we all want quality care, we all want good outcomes—will actually lead to justification of cuts to services. There's also been serious concern raised that this legislation will only apply to hospitals rather than to other health care settings. This means that the whole cycle of care is excluded. It doesn't insist on quality care in our community.

The RNAO is worried about this. I think the minister gave the example that 140,000 patients were readmitted. Those are patients who had been in the hospital, had received treatment, had received their discharge, and 140,000 of them got readmitted to the hospital within 30 days of original discharge. The minister agreed that was

too high and we could do better, and the New Democrats agree with that statement.

The problem is that the readmission may have nothing to do with the quality of care in the hospital. The hospital care might have been as good as could ever be dreamed of, but the care that the patient received through home care, the care that the patient received in the community, is where the system failed. The way the bill is written right now, the Excellent Care for All Act really focuses on hospitals. I have no problem with the step-in approach, where we start with hospitals, but here again the bill is silent as to when it will be extended to the rest of the health care system. When will it be expanded to home care, to home support, to long-term care, to primary care, to rehab, to everything else outside of the hospital setting that also has a role to play to make sure that after people are discharged from the hospital, they have a successful recovery?

We don't know because it's not in the bill. The bill hints that it's about to apply to everybody but we don't know when, we don't know how, we don't who's in, we don't know who's out. We know for sure that the hospitals are in, but the rest of them—is primary care in? When will that be in? Those are valid questions. A dialogue would probably help answer those questions. And if there's not an answer, at least we will know what the process is to get to the answer, but we won't have a chance to do any of that because Monique Smith put a time allocation motion on, and I have 11 minutes left and that will be the end of that—that will be the end.

We also have an issue that the new hospital funding model applies to small, rural and northern hospitals. To their credit, the government has announced that the new funding model will not apply to smaller hospitals. That's very nice of this minister to say this, but we would like to see it in the bill. I haven't been here that long and there have been three Ministers of Health since I've been here. So what's to tell me that the next Minister of Health thinks that small, rural and northern hospitals should be included? Not that I doubt her words, but she may not be there. What if the next one changes it?

People have a right to ask to see those promises in writing. Let's see them in the bill. We don't really know exactly what the new funding model will be. We hear hints of it. We hear parts of it sometimes in the paper, but I can tell you that there's very little of it in the bill. There are a few mentions of it in the budget, actually, of all places, but that doesn't help us in our case. We would like to see it in black and white in the bill.

I will be bringing forward amendments that ask to do just that. I hope I will have a chance to fully present my arguments for those changes and that the government and my colleagues from all parties will be open to a debate. If we are serious that the new funding model should not be applied to small, rural, and northern hospitals, then why wouldn't we want to put in it writing? Give the confidence out there in the field that this is a battle they don't have to fight anymore. "Rest assured, as long as we have a definition as to who is small, rural and northern, you don't have to worry about this new funding model; it won't apply to you." The minister has said so already. Isn't it time to put that in writing?

I will introduce amendments to do this. I hope I will have an opportunity to present them, because we know from the motion that it's at 6:45, I think. If I haven't had time to present those, they will be deemed rejected without debate, without going on the record. This is what a time allocation does: It takes away the opportunity for debate.

As I said, this is not even such a controversial bill, because there's so little in it. But it's still a bill, and if we're going to do something, let's do something right, let's do something good and let's listen to what people have to say about it. If there's an opportunity to make it better, why not act upon this opportunity?

I just came back from a 12-city tour of small and rural hospitals with the Ontario Health Coalition, and I can tell you that there are a lot of small hospitals out there that are very, very worried. A lot of small hospitals have lost some of the key services they offer and are worried that with those changes, the door will be open to more change and to more cuts.

The government created a rural and northern hospital panel, but this panel has yet to listen to the voices of the people who live in those communities and are affected by the health care providers in those communities.

The Ontario Health Coalition put out a panel made up of an ex-Liberal, myself, physicians, nurses, members of the public, trustees of hospitals. We travelled to 12 rural and northern communities and listened to what they had to say and put forward a report. In this report, you have 1,467 stories of people who have been affected by changes, by cuts, decreasing access in their hospital systems, in the small rural and northern hospitals of Ontario.

So you can see how important this is to people. They see what's happening on the ground right now. They hear a minister who says, "We are not going to apply this new funding model to you." They want to see this in writing. Wouldn't that bring a sigh of relief from all of those people? But what the people see right now is that services have been closed in smaller communities, and they often have not been accountable to residents in these towns. The government is not accountable for what those people are supposed to do.

When I was in Picton in March, the physio department was scheduled to close on March 31. We were there about 10 days before the closing. The people had already received their layoff notices. There were dietitians and physiotherapists who came and presented, and there were also physiotherapy patients. A person with a brand new hip replacement came in a wheelchair. There was a lady with severe trauma to an elbow, who was undergoing intensive outpatient physiotherapy at the hospital. She had been told that as of March 31, she had to find alternate physiotherapy services because the hospital was no longer going to provide those services. There was a private physiotherapy clinic close by, but this particular person did not have the financial means to pay for physiotherapy

and did not have any insurance for that type of service. So, for her, it meant travelling a long distance to an urban hospital and hopefully getting on the waiting list for their outpatient physio or doing without.

That's not exactly very reassuring for people living in rural Ontario. They would like to see changes to the bill. They would like to see amendments move forward. I hope we will get to see this.

2200

I know that my colleague talked about the chiropractors. They had a chance to come and present, and they also made some good points. One of them was about the need for the Ontario Health Quality Council to examine clinical guidelines for not only publicly funded services, but also those that are not funded. We all know that physiotherapist, chiropractor and optometrist services were delisted, which means they are no longer covered, they are no longer considered a public service. If the Ontario Health Quality Council only looks at services that are being paid for, then that means that some of the best practices—if you look at some of the best practices for whiplash, for neck injuries, for a lot of musculosketal injuries, they will include what chiropractors have to offer, what physiotherapists have to offer, but, because the government has delisted them—they're now outside of the public system, they're not going to be considered by the Ontario Health Quality Council—or are they? The bill is not clear.

We would like to bring clarity, and I will be bringing amendments to bring clarity. If they are to be included—I kind of doubt it. I didn't see anything in the bill that said that they would be, but I didn't see anything in the bill that says that they are specifically excluded either. Why not make it clear so that you make sure that if the Ontario Health Quality Council is going to be developing best practices for all sorts of problems, including whiplash, the one I'm talking about, you make sure that the care the chiropractor has to provide is included in this? They certainly made good arguments for that in their deputation.

The patients who use those services, the services that have been delisted, deserve the same high-quality care as anybody else, but we will only do this if they are included in the Ontario Health Quality Council development of good, quality services.

A similar argument was made by the association of medical laboratory technologists that, in terms of non-hospital settings, it should be included in the scope of the Ontario Health Quality Council. Most people who go to their family physicians and ask for a blood test of any kind go to a private lab, either MDS or MSL or any of the private labs. Right now, the way the bill is written, none of the care that is provided by the private labs is going to be taken into account. I'm giving an example of some of the amendments that I will be bringing forward, but really it's an opportunity for debate that I would like to see.

I'm just looking at the clock. All I have are seconds left and I still have all of those pages that I haven't gone through. I kind of have given up. There is no way I'm going to have an opportunity to even put them on the record.

This is what a time allocation motion does. It basically does not allow us to go fully in depth as to what is good in this bill, what is problematic, what needs to be clarified and what certainly needs to be improved. When a time allocation comes forward—I have all of 19 seconds left on the clock to tell you about another 40 pages that we've received from people who want to have their voices heard so that they can influence the bill, but they will never have a chance to be heard because my time is up.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 24. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I have, dated May 31, to the Speaker and pursuant to standing order 28(h), a request that the vote on government motion number 24 be deferred. This will be deferred until tomorrow after question period, and that's June 1.

Vote deferred.

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations, when the bill is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the vote on second reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet for one day of public hearings in each of Toronto, Kitchener, Sudbury and Kingston, and for two days for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, on dates provided for in a schedule of meeting dates agreed to by the three party whips and tabled with the Clerk of the Assembly; and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than September 13, 2010. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I don't know whether the member was here when I spoke the last time. I know she has been in the House almost all night. But I don't know what we're doing here. I don't know why Liberals are sitting there and smiling and thinking, "Why was I elected?" I come here and there aren't even chances to debate. There are no chances. Everything's closed before we even know what the bill is about. Here it is, introduced at the last minute. Here it is. We're all going to run off and do it exactly in a routine and systematic way that satisfies the government House leader to get things done with maximum efficiency. I didn't think that that's what a Legislature was for. I didn't think that's why she got elected or I got elected or anyone else got elected—for maximum efficiency, for one person to tell you how a bill is going to be debated? How many people are going to be able to speak to it?

When it comes back to the Legislature, all of the circumstances under which it will be—the votes will be held and the Speaker will have to rule on it and everything else. I don't understand the rush. I do understand, had there been some negotiation with the government House leader and the House leaders of the other two parties, that these kinds of things could have been resolved. If it's necessary to have hearings over the summer recess, I'm sure that could have been resolved. But that's not what's happening here. What is happening here is that the government, by fiat, is ordering how everything is going to happen in this House, and 106 other people, other than the government House leader, have absolutely no say.

I'm seeing all the Liberals sitting over there. I'm seeing all the government members who will put their hands up and allow this to happen.

I don't understand, because when I was here before, when it was the Eves and Harris governments and this kind of thing was taking place in the House, there were eloquent statements made by most of you about how bad it was. Now, all of a sudden, you accept it. You accept the diminution of your power and your authority as MPPs. You accept that there is nothing you can do and you blindly go along on whatever is being told to you by the government whip.

I am ashamed. I said it before and I'll say it again: I am ashamed for this House and for this process, that we have come to this point, that this is the way things are done. I have seen this in other places around the world, and we don't like it. We don't like it when it happens in other places around the world, but we accept that it happens here. We accept that we are diminished in our role. It is wrong. It was wrong when you criticized it when you were in opposition, and it's wrong today when you're in government, doing the self-same thing with no rational reason given—absolutely none.

I'm not going to vote for this. I know you're going to all put up your hands and do it, but I'm not going to vote for it. I think this is disgraceful, what is happening to this House.

Interjection: Adjourn the House.

Mr. Michael Prue: No, I'm not going to do that either. I'm not going to play into that.

It is disgraceful what you are allowing to happen to this House and it is disgraceful what the government members are allowing to happen to this institution. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I echo my friend's comments from across the way: This government is running down the road far too quickly. There were debates in front of the people of Ontario; for instance, the harmonization of the sales tax, the so-called HST, in which we wanted to have a day's debate, in which we wanted a free vote for the members of this House to cast a ballot as to how they felt about this particular bill, whether they thought it was good for Ontario. The government talks about how good it is for Ontario. We wondered how many people over there would have voted for it. We were very concerned about not having an opportunity to vote for it. Now we go rushing down the road with this time allocation stuff. The member from St. Catharines used to rail against time allocation motions when we brought in a couple. This government is running their government with time allocation. You're running your government by time allocation.

Interjections.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It's no more of an exaggeration than what this government is doing.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: They won't listen to reason, Mr. Speaker.

I move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Chudleigh has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2213 to 2243.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Chudleigh has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

Take your seats, please.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 7; the nays are 28.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Chudleigh.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This bill, of course, was based on some studies the government did. They did those studies two years ago, in 2006-07, I believe. Then two years later they brought it in to the House. When they brought it into the House, they introduced the bill on, I believe, a Tuesday afternoon after caucus, and they introduced debate almost immediately, on the Wednesday, which didn't allow us to caucus the bill or to take a party position on it.

This has happened more and more, with bills being introduced by this government and rushed through after the government having lots of time to decide whether to bring it in. I guess what I'm getting at is that there's just no co-operation whatsoever from this government. That makes the democratic process, being prepared for debate in this House, very difficult. You're always doing it on a hurried-up basis. There's no opportunity to caucus, there's no opportunity to consult with organizations and trade associations and various voluntary organizations that may want to have some comment on the bill. That makes it all very difficult.

This bill also talks to voluntary organizations. As they talk to voluntary organizations, it makes it very difficult, because they talk about making it easier to become a voluntary organization, but they don't have anything in the bill that I can see that would protect the public from those charity or volunteer organizations which may take advantage of the goodness of the Canadian public. They talk about Canada being the second most active volunteer country, the Netherlands being first, the United States being fifth, I believe, and Canada being second. Those are all admirable qualities, but so often when you draw forth the best people in our society, you also drag up some of the worst people in our society. I don't see anything in this bill that protects the public from those who would take advantage of the giving nature of Canadians. I think that's a real shortcoming of this bill as well.

All in all, this bill leaves a lot to be desired. It needed more time in debate, I think it needed more time in committee and I think it needed more consultation with those people it was designed to help. The problem is that this government just hasn't taken that time. I think that perhaps the government doesn't want to spend the time on the bill, so I don't see why we should spend that time in the House. I would move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Chudleigh has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2248 to 2318.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Chudleigh has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

Take your seats, please.

All those opposed please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

Take your seats, please.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 7; the nays are 28.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Chudleigh still has the floor.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a privilege to have the opportunity to rise this evening at this late hour to take part in this debate on Bill 65, even though it's short notice and very little detail to work with.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Not too many people are watching in Sarnia.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Not too many people are up at this hour. They go to bed early; they turn in early there. They all get up early.

Mr. Jeff Leal: They have to be up too early.

Mr. Robert Bailey: They're down at the coffee shops early in the morning, so they're all in bed early. They're all up consulting at that time of morning, so they don't do their consulting in the evening.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The good, honest folks who have a job.

Mr. Robert Bailey: All the ones who are working are up early. They go to the coffee shop.

Anyway, this bill refers to the non-profits, which is a very important sector of the corporations that are represented in Ontario. I'm thinking of all the non-profit organizations like Goodwill, the Optimists, all the service clubs, a number of United Ways, and a number of these organizations which would be impacted by this bill. It would be very important that we have input from them, have an opportunity for them to speak to us, speak to the members, all the different MPPs from across the province, so that they have an opportunity to see how this bill would affect them with its impact when it is inputted, and as the debate takes place, so that we make sure we hear from all these non-profit organizations, so that their boards of directors and all of the employees also know how they would be affected by this.

On the short notice that's given for us to interact and to consult with people across Ontario—it's always mentioned by the government that it's a very important part, that they should have consultation. It pains me much, but I would like to ask that we have—I would move adjournment of the debate at this time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2322 to 2352.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Bailey has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

Take your seats, please.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

Take your seats, please.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 7; the nays are 27.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Bailey.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I see the vote is getting closer. The count is getting closer, so we're going to try again; we're going to keep working on this.

I appreciate the opportunity to stand and talk about Bill 65 and the impact it's going to have on the non-profit organizations. I know it's going to have a serious impact. One thing I've been thinking about is if there was some way, perhaps, that this bill was delayed overnight, people would have an opportunity through the night and overnight to get to us—fax us, phone calls, telegrams, whatever—and there would be opportunities for the members to hear from all of their constituents. I know they'd like to do that.

Also, something else: I had the opportunity, during that intermission, to go out and interact with our friends on the lawn again, who we spoke about earlier this evening, the injured workers. They commended the members of the opposition in both parties who took the opportunity to come out and sojourn with them, who had an opportunity to understand their issues. So I think at this time I'm going to move adjournment of the House, which would give the opportunity for the government side to go and interact with those people.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Bailey has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2354 to 0024.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Members, take your seats, please. It's getting late.

Mr. Bailey has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

You can take your seat now.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

Take your seats, please.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 1; the nays are 19.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Debate deemed adjourned.

It being somewhat past 12 of the clock, this House is adjourned until Tuesday, June 1, at 9 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 0025.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters
Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margarett R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craitor
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Amrit Mangat, Phil McNeely
John O'Toole
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przezdziecki

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
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Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Glen R Murray, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Bob Chiarelli, Steve Clark
Helena Jaczek, Kuldip Kular
Dave Levac, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Orazietti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, M. Aileen Carroll
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Leeanna Pendergast
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Reza Moridi
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Norm Miller
Yasir Naqvi, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
M. Aileen Carroll, France Gélinas
Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay
Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craitor
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
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Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 1 June 2010

Mardi 1er juin 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 June 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1er juin 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

Prayers.

SPECIAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a special report from the Auditor General of Ontario respecting expense practices at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 31, 2010, on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les organisations sans but lucratif.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 47(b), there having been two hours of debate on the motion, I am now required to put the question.

On May 31, Ms. Smith moved government notice of motion 25.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote is deferred until following question period today.

Vote deferred.

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North, when the bill is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government; and

That the vote on second reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet for four days during the week of June 14, 2010, for public hearings in each of Slate Falls, Webequie, Sandy Lake, Attawapiskat and Moosonee, and during its regular meeting times on Monday, September 13, 2010, and Wednesday, September 15, 2010, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 noon on Wednesday, September 8, 2010. At 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 15, 2010, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Thursday, September 16, 2010. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on General Government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion of 26. Debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would say thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, but I don't know what to thank when it comes to this particular bill, first of all, being time-

allocated and being dealt with in the way that it's being put forward now.

It is clear that First Nations, I want to say upfront, want to have a regime of planning instituted in the Far North. It is clear that First Nations want to have development around their communities so that they're able to deal properly with the issues of making sure that there is economic opportunity for their community and community members. But, clearly, what the government is proposing now by way of the Far North planning act doesn't meet with the approval of First Nations.

Why do we know that? We know that because we've already gone out to committee hearings, and I give the government some credit. I'm not going to say that was a bad thing; I think that was a very good thing. They decided to do a bit of a trial balloon and after the bill was initially drafted, they put the bill out in committee along with the Mining Act last year, where we had an opportunity to travel to a number of communities not so much in the Far North but in the near north in order to deal with what people have to say about this particular bill. It was unanimous. There wasn't anybody who liked it. Nobody said—

Interjection: Monte Hummel—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Monte Hummel liked it, but that's a whole other question. By and large, all of the First Nations, the environmentalists, the mining association and others, all of them were saying that this particular bill created a whole bunch of problems, and I'll get into that a little bit later. But what was really clear was that First Nations didn't like this particular version of the bill, and they were very clear. They said, "We want to engage in dialogue with the provincial government," using this new relationship supposedly that has been developed so that they can come to some kind of understanding about what the Far North planning act should look like.

So the First Nations expected, because the Premier—they took him at his word—said there is a new relationship. They said, "This new relationship then should mean that we're going to have this dialogue, and we're going to have an understanding and have some input about what goes in this particular bill as it's redrafted for second reading."

Well, how did they find out that the bill was coming back? We heard it from the Minister of Natural Resources the other day when we were debating this bill at second reading. She ran across Grand Chief Stan Beardy in an airport and told him as they were getting on the plane—some new relationship. You're supposing to have government-to-government relationships with First Nations. It's not about telling somebody as you're boarding an aircraft, "Oh, by the way, I'm bringing back the Far North planning act and hope you like it."

Jeez, I can tell you that Chief Stan Beardy is somewhat upset and so are the other chiefs and elders and those people in resource planning in the Far North when it comes to this particular act. They're saying, "You have not consulted us in any meaningful way about what amendments should be in this act from first to second reading." There are some principles that they want to see contained in the act that are not in the act now, and they're telling you quite clearly—letters have been written by my good colleague Mr. Hillier from the Conservative Party and myself. NAN, Treaty 3 and others have sent letters to the government saying, "Do not allow this bill to go to second reading until you've addressed these issues."

So I say to the government across the way, a new relationship? How is it new for First Nations when they see basically the same kind of treatment that they've been getting for years, which is colonialism at its best when it comes to how we deal with First Nations? I just want to say to the government, shame on you for having tried to say that you've got a new relationship when clearly the relationship has not changed, and what you're doing is dictating, by way of your majority in this House, what you think is good for those First Nations. That, to me, sounds a bit paternalistic.

0910

I also want to say that the process by which we're now going to go to deal with second reading is flawed at best. This time allocation motion says that we're going to have four days of hearings in about two weeks' time. We're going to go to a couple of communities up in the Far North, some of which I agree with. There should be more, but here we are. We're going to get a scant four days in order to consult with First Nations in the Far North on this particular bill.

But here's the kicker: They're going to communities where there's not going to be anybody there when they show up, because the week that they're travelling, there's the assembly of Mushkegowuk tribal chiefs. The elders and the resource planning people are going to be at a meeting in Chapleau, where I'm going to be, when it comes to their annual assembly. So when you try to go into Moosonee and Attawapiskat, you're going to have a hard time trying to find people to present to this bill, because the very people who you want to talk to are not going to be in the community because they're at their annual assembly.

This, I think, demonstrates to what degree this government's out of touch when it comes to trying to work with First Nations. If little old me, a member of the opposition, knew that the Mushkegowuk tribal chiefs were not going to be around that week, a government with all the apparatus that it has—where the heck are they? Did they fall asleep at the switch?

There was a great opportunity, I believe, that was missed by way of having time allocation. It takes away the opportunity to try to tie into a couple of meetings that are taking place in the next couple of weeks that would have given First Nations an opportunity to have a greater say about this legislation and for the standing committee to hear from them. The first one is that NAN is having their annual assembly. That's going on, I believe, on the eighth and ninth of June, to which I know my leader, Andrea Horwath, is going to be going. I'm going to try to get up to it myself. That's going to be going on in one of

the Far North communities; I believe Sandy Lake, if I remember correctly.

So here's an opportunity where all of the chiefs of Treaty 9 are going to be assembled at one place, along with the elders and, more importantly, those people who work in resource planning—the whole issue of planning in the Far North. They're going to be in one community. We could have taken that day, we could have taken a day and a half, whatever it takes, in order for the standing committee to go to the community just prior to their annual meeting starting or just after their annual meeting finishing, so that we can engage in dialogue with those chiefs and elders and land use planning people as to what they think needs to be in this bill. There was one opportunity to, in one day, talk to more people who have something to say about this than any other opportunity we would have had.

The other one is that Matawa is having their annual meeting, along with the Mushkegowuk—they're having their meeting, I believe, the week of June 14. So I say to the government, good for you that you're sending this bill to the Far North. I say that is a good thing. But boy, you sure know how to pick your weeks. You're picking weeks when people aren't going to be there.

This is the other point: trying to organize getting people to present to this committee. Basically, what we're going to have is a week, because this bill is now going to be, by way of time allocation, voted on sometime probably within the next day or two; if not this afternoon, then tomorrow. Then the committee has a week in order to strike up who it is who's going to come and present to the committee.

I'm going to predict that there's not going to be a lot of take-up for two reasons: One is, how do you, within a week—people don't get this, right? You've got landlocked communities that have no roads and no rail. The only method of transportation going in is by plane. Most of the communities don't have Internet, and they have phone service that at times is problematic, let's just put it that way. How are you going to allow those communities to find out (a) that this particular committee is coming to their community, (b) what it's all about, and (c) give them the chance to organize themselves so that they can have people do some meaningful process of thought about what this bill is and what they think it should look like, in a week's time? It's preposterous what you're up to. If you're going to force this thing by time allocation, it would seem to me that what the government should have tried to do is try to find a process, in discussion with First Nations, as to "When would it be appropriate for us to travel to your communities? Which communities do you think we need to travel to within Treaty 3 and Treaty 9? Who are those people who want to have the most say on this?" Give the First Nations an opportunity to organize so that they can have a meaningful opportunity to give input into this process at committee.

But no, the government has made up its mind. It's pretty darned clear. What they're going to do by way of this time allocation motion is, quite frankly, not give the communities the opportunity to have the say that they want. I say to the government, it's really clever on your part, using time allocation; very good, efficient use of time. But I'll tell you, it is at the cost of First Nations and at the cost of a final product that could be better.

Now to the issue, the Far North planning act: Is the Far North planning act a good idea? Absolutely. I don't think anybody in this House is going to argue, and neither will First Nations, that there doesn't need to be some form of a planning regime when it comes to how we do development in the Far North. I don't think anybody would argue against that. But what's contained in the act is what the issue really is. First of all, you have to allow First Nations the ability to have a say about what planning is going to look like in their communities. To do that, there are a number of things that have to happen.

First of all, there needs to be sufficient time for First Nations themselves to first work individually as First Nations and then as a group within their own tribal councils in order to start working at trying to determine what the approach should be when it comes to land use planning, using some provincial policies to guide them. It's fairly clear, in my view, that First Nations have been working for a long time on a number of these issues, and some communities are ready to go.

Why didn't the government take an approach and say, "All right, we're going to create a land use planning act that enables First Nations to adopt the planning regime that suits their needs and follows provincial policy that would allow them to do it at the time that they're ready to do it"?

I've got to tell you, there are a number of communities that are there and prepared to go and do what needs to be done in order to enact some sort of a planning regime in their community. There are other communities that are not there, and they're not there for a number of reasons: One, there's an issue of overlapping jurisdictions between communities that they have to deal with. Most people don't know this, but within the First Nations communities, there are some pretty grey lines about which community has jurisdiction over which part of the territory. A lot of this was as per how families hunted and gathered over a period of time. There needs to be some discussion between the communities about who's responsible and where the line ends when it comes to the jurisdiction of community A versus community B. Some of these communities need the time to work their way through this so that the territory of the communities can be defined clearly so that people know who it is they've got to deal with.

If you have a development that is in one of those areas that is, let's say, subject to—what would be the word?—overlapping jurisdictions, where two communities are claiming the same territory, the developer is going to have one heck of a time. Who do you deal with? Why put the developer in that particular position?

What you need to do is allow First Nations the ability to determine where the boundaries are. Yes, you can give them some timelines to do that to a degree, but you've got to give them sufficient time to do that.

The other thing is that you have to allow First Nations the ability to develop the capacity to do this in the first place. There are some communities, as I said, that are ready to go. They've been working at this for a long time. They've been developing capacity in their communities and within their tribal councils to deal with this issue, and they're ready to go. But there are other communities that are just not there yet because development has not even come close to those communities, and it's something that they're starting to think of just now.

I take a look at what the government likes to tout as the next great economic opportunity in northern Ontario; it's called the Ring of Fire. If you look at the communities in the circle around the Ring of Fire, a majority of those communities at this point are not prepared to deal with those planning issues in the way that the government wants them to do so. There needs to be some time taken for some of those communities to deal with the jurisdictional issues and also the issues of capacity development, and for them to clearly understand what it is that they want, what the sensitive areas are that they want to protect, and to do the kind of stuff that needs to be done in order to make sure that proper land use planning is done.

0920

I just say to the government across the way: Really, you're trying to hurry this process in such a way that at the end it's not going to get you what you want. I'll tell you what we're going to end up with: We are going to end up, with this act, with two things. First of all, you're going to have communities that are going to be offside, and when developers go in to do mining development or forestry development or hydroelectric development, whatever it might be, the First Nation community may not be ready and we're going to have blockades. That's what's going to happen.

Why put communities in that position? The ore has been in the ground for thousands of years. Waiting another year or two to give them a chance to get themselves organized to me doesn't seem very onerous. From the perspective of the developer, they need to know clearly what the heck the rules are. You can't have what we've got now, which is a system where we're going to be in a position where you still don't have a clear set of rules of what development is going to be. It's going to put those developers in a position that I think is quite unfortunate.

I just want to say clearly, as well, a couple of things. I started out with this at the beginning and I just want to say it again. There is hardly anyone in the First Nations communities who is opposed to the idea of development. The question is, how is the development going to happen and who's going to benefit? That's the issue that they deal with. I look at the Musselwhite project; I look at the Detour—I'll talk about Detour Lake in a minute. I look at the Musselwhite project and I look at the Attawapiskat Victor mine project. There have been some really good examples where companies have gone in and taken the time to negotiate an impact benefit agreement with the First Nation.

If we used the private sector principles that De Beers put in place to negotiate their IBA with the Attawapiskat First Nation and other First Nations that were affected, I can tell you, we wouldn't be doing time allocation. If De Beers had tried to do development by way of what this government is doing with time allocation to short-circuit the process, there would have been huge problems as far as trying to get any kind of an agreement, and, I would argue, that mine would not be operating today. The only reason that mine is operating today is because De Beers understood that they needed to have the consent—and that's the issue here. They needed to have the consent of the First Nation to go forward. They said, right off the start, years ago, "We, De Beers Canada, will not start this mine unless we have consent from the First Nations and we have an IBA negotiated with each one of them"—impact benefit agreements.

Did that take time? Absolutely, it took time. I venture to guess that it was at least seven to eight years from the beginning to the process of actually ratifying the IBA in Attawapiskat. Was it easy? Absolutely not. For both De Beers and Attawapiskat, it was a difficult process, not because they were antagonistic to each other, but first of all, Attawapiskat: "What's an IBA? What's a diamond mine? How much is that worth? What does it mean to me?"—all of those questions. As some community members came to terms with that, other community members didn't come to terms with it. There were some people who still were opposed to the project. So it took a long time for the proper questions to be asked by the First Nation to their leadership about what should be in an impact benefit agreement.

For De Beers, was it easy? Absolutely not. They spent, I would argue, probably upwards of 20 million bucks to negotiate that IBA. The amount of money it took in order for them to take the staff time, the travel—because everything is by charter. It's not as if you can walk across the street here in Toronto and take the subway to a meeting; you've got to charter aircraft in order to move either the De Beers people to Attawapiskat or the Attawapiskat people to the De Beers office here in Toronto. Lawyers had to be hired. Environmental specialists had to be hired. It took a long time.

Eventually, De Beers Canada, along with the Attawapiskat First Nation, came to an understanding. Was it a perfect understanding? Absolutely not. There are still people in the community of Attawapiskat today who, quite frankly, don't like this IBA. But the majority—and I think it was 85%, when it went to a vote—said yes.

Has everything in the IBA turned out to be the way that they want it in the First Nation? No. There have been some problems with the IBA, because again, as they negotiated the IBA, the understanding on the part of the greater part of the community was probably somewhat lacking as far as what mining really brings to their community. So they're learning as they go ahead, and there have been a couple of blockades along the way in order to try to—the community tried to come to terms with the IBA even after it was passed. But, by and large,

we have an agreement. The mine is operating. I can tell you, once we get to the next diamond pipes, Attawapiskat, as they negotiate IBAs with De Beers or whoever, is absolutely going to know what questions to ask and what to put inside their IBAs.

But that's the point I'm making: It takes time. If De Beers Canada—and De Beers International doesn't have the best record in the world when it comes dealing with aboriginal people, but certainly in Canada, De Beers Canada does. When it came to negotiating, De Beers understood, and I don't understand why the government doesn't understand this. De Beers understood that you cannot force an agreement onto a community, that there has to be consent on the part of the community. If De Beers Canada understands that, where the heck is the provincial government?

The same is now taking place with the Detour Lake project. Now, most members of this House will say, "Detour Lake? What's that?" That's got to be the largest gold mine, if not just in North America, probably in the world. It's in my riding, again. There's going to be a pit that's going to be developed on the old Detour Lake project that's probably two kilometres long by 1,000 feet wide. They'll be mining 50,000 to 60,000 tonnes a day from that particular operation. It's a $1.2-billion project, so it's a pretty big thing.

Here's what Detour Gold is doing: They're sitting down and they're negotiating with Moose Cree First Nation and other affected First Nations to that project. They're not trying to truncate the process. They're not trying to force the community into an agreement. They're trying to find an agreement to which the communities can consent. Will they be successful? I think so. I think that Moose Cree has a lot of experience at negotiating IBAs with the mining sector, with OPG and others, so I think the capacity in that community is far enough ahead that they're able to negotiate an IBA with Detour Lake. But my point is, if the mining companies understand that you've got to take the time to negotiate, that you can't force agreements onto communities and there needs to be consent, where the heck is the government? Where's the government?

Now, here's the problem: Not every mining company is a Detour Gold or a De Beers. There are some bad apples out there, and we saw that in the case of KI with Platinex, where they went in and just tried to do it on their own. They tried to get no consent and they tried to railroad over the community. The government's response was what? Was it, "Hang on, mining company—back off, mining explorationists," I should say. "Back off for a second. The First Nations community isn't ready. Go do what Detour Gold is doing and go do what De Beers did"? No; the government took the leadership and threw them in jail. Talk about a new relationship. They took the leadership and they put them in jail for standing up for their rights in order to try to block the mining exploration company from going ahead with the advanced exploration they were trying to do.

So I'm just saying to the government: Listen. Understand that First Nations want development. First Nations do not want their community members to live in poverty. First Nations leadership wants their First Nations members to enjoy the same benefits that we enjoy outside of those First Nations in communities like Timmins, in communities like Toronto and Hamilton, where people are able to get jobs and build better lives for themselves and their families. They see the abject poverty in their communities every day. They see the dysfunctionality that the poverty brings. They want development for their First Nations members, but they want to have a say about how that development's going to happen so that they can make sure that they protect their interests, both when it comes to their economic interests and when it comes to their interests on the land, the environmental protection that is needed in developing these particular projects.

The government needs to understand that the First Nations are ready. They want to go there. But you cannot force them into a process such as you're forcing them now, because NAN and Treaty 3, Mushkegowuk tribal, Wabun, all of them have told you the same thing: "We want planning, we want a planning act, but we need to have a system by which we have an ability to give our consent about how planning is going to take place," and that's not in this bill.

Now, the other part of this bill which—I'm going to go there in a minute. The other thing is that the government also needs to understand that it's not just strictly about planning now, because yes, you need to have a planning act of a type that gives developers an understanding of what it is they can do and can't do with regards to the environment and the economic interests of First Nations communities, but you've also got to deal with revenue-sharing. Communities in the Far North have to have the same ability as any other community when it comes to benefiting from the economic development that's going on in their area.

0930

In the city of Timmins, when a mine is established within our community, Mayor Tom Laughren and his council don't have to pass any special legislation. There is an Assessment Act that deals with how we're going to assess taxes on that mining development or whatever development it might be. The taxes that are generated from those particular buildings and properties are paid in the form of assessment to the municipality so that we have some money to build some infrastructure.

If you build a mine in a place like Attawapiskat, the company doesn't have to do anything. There's no requirement to pay any kind of assessment on property or on value of buildings or anything to the First Nation.

Am I arguing that we should have municipal taxation for First Nations? That's not my argument. What I say is that the government needs to recognize that we need to find a way to share the revenue that we currently get from the mining activity and that it be shared with the First Nation. I would argue: You don't create a new tax; what you do is take the existing taxes that are paid on the part of the mining companies and we, the province of Ontario, share those taxes in some sort of way that's

commensurate with what municipalities would get. If, let's say, a project would generate for the city of Timmins $2 million a year and the project is so big, the province of Ontario should take some of its revenue from various forms of taxation that we get on mining activities, and that equal amount of $2 million a year should be, by statute, given to the First Nation so that they can build roads, water plants, housing, sewer systems; so they can build an arena for kids to have a place to go play hockey; so they can do those things that we take for granted in our communities.

I want you—those members who are lucky enough to go on this committee when it travels in two weeks—to look at the infrastructure in each and every one of the communities we're going to travel into. I'm going to ask you a very simple question at the end of the four days: Would you raise your family in those communities? No paved roads; absolutely not. Not one paved road in any community. What does that mean? That means it's a really dusty place in the summer and it's an extremely muddy place in the spring and summer. What does that do for the psyche of a community when you're tracking dirt just because of the condition of the roads?

Housing that is inadequate and busted and there isn't the money to fix it; families that are living 20, 25 people in a house; a community that doesn't have a hockey rink, a community that doesn't have a gym where kids can go and play basketball or volleyball or do the things that need to be done; communities where schools are—quite frankly, if you sent your child to that school, you'd pull them out—schools with mould in them; schools with textbooks that don't exist or are in really bad shape; schools that are funded at 50% of the rate of a provincial school because our federal government is absent when it comes to their responsibility to those First Nations.

I want you to visit those four communities that we're going to be in and I want you to come out at the end of it and tell me if you would raise your family in those communities. I can tell you what the answer is going to be: You're going to say no.

So the question is this: Once you've seen it, what do you do about it? The first place we can start is where we have the ability to make a change, and that is in the planning act that you're trying to create under the Far North planning act and with revenue-sharing, so that communities at least have the hope of developing infrastructure in their communities that becomes equal to or greater than what we find in our communities down south. I don't think that's asking for a heck of a lot. Why should a mining, forest or hydroelectric activity happen in the Far North and the First Nations not benefit from it? It's their territory.

We forget that when we signed Treaty 9 with our First Nations, which is Nishnawbe Aski, and Treaty 3 and others, the basis of the treaty was really simple: "We, First Nations, do not cede our land to the crown. We agree to share the land with the crown and that the benefit that derives from the land be shared between our two nations." That was the basis of the agreement. Since then, now 100 years plus, we've done very little from the crown side—being the province and the federal government—to do any sharing. We've been really good at taking. Oh, God, we've taken it all, and we've left them with communities that are, quite frankly, substandard when it comes to infrastructure. We've done quite well with the resources we've extracted in northern Ontario and across this province and have left First Nations far behind.

I can't change what my ancestors did in this Legislature 100 years ago; neither can anybody in this House. But certainly to God we can change something today. Certainly to God we, as members in this assembly, can say we don't agree with what's happened in the past as far as how we've taken advantage of First Nations, how we have not lived up to our side of the bargain, and that we are going to do better. We are going to ensure that we do have a planning act that works for First Nations, that they can be proud of, that they can say is theirs and they can move forward with development. Certainly to God we can do revenue-sharing so that those projects that go forward have an ability to give some economic activity to those First Nations communities.

I say to the government that trying to short-circuit this process, you're not doing them any favours. If you think that you're the great saviours of First Nations and you're going to do some wonderful things to help them along, they don't need this kind of help.

What they need is a government and a Legislature that understands that they are still a sovereign people, that this is their land and they're still prepared to share with us, but we need to have a mechanism by which they're able to benefit and have a say about what happens. It's a very simple concept.

Now, I say again, we've got some good examples in Ontario. We're quite fortunate. Some of the mining outfits that are operating in Ontario are further ahead of the government than we are as a Legislature.

Mr. Peter Shurman: The ones that are left.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The ones that are left is a whole other issue.

The point is that certainly to God if Detour Gold, who's now negotiating IBAs with First Nations, if the Victor mine, De Beers Canada, who has negotiated IBAs with Attawapiskat and other First Nations, understand the concept, where the heck is the government?

I've got to say, you're not only making things bad for First Nations by way of what you're doing, you're not making things any easier for those companies that are trying to operate in the Far North, because I'll tell you, they understand that they have a responsibility. I'll tell you what they'll do.

Companies like De Beers or Detour Gold or Lake Shore Gold, who's negotiating an IBA in Timmins as we speak, are all in the same situation. They're going to look at the model and say, "Here's an ore body. This is how much ore is in it. This is what the grade is. This is how many tonnes we've got to take out. Factor in what it's going to cost us to have an IBA with the First Nations

community. Factor in what it's going to cost to negotiate that, and we either have or don't have a mine."

It's the same way they do it when they come into the city of Timmins. When they come into the city of Timmins, Sudbury or Kenora—I should say Red Lake or Kirkland Lake—to build a mine, they look at how much it's going to cost to build and they decide it's either a project or it's not.

Companies understand how this works, but what they need to have are clear rules about where they can explore, how that exploration can take place, what the requirements are when it comes to advance exploration when it comes to First Nations, what the requirements are when it comes to development of a mine and how First Nations are going to benefit. They'll factor in what the cost is, and they're either going to say, "It's a mine or it's not a mine." It's a really simple process.

I don't understand why the government doesn't get this. It's not as if we've not had this debate before. I and others have been pushing this issue for years in this Legislature. We've actually passed at second reading a revenue-sharing act that I put forward in this Parliament about six, seven years ago. Unfortunately, the government didn't adopt it at third reading, but this House at least provided some leadership by saying, "Yes, we agree with the concept. Let's go forward and try to figure out what needs to be done."

I say to the government, shame on you, because time allocation might be very cute within the Liberal ranks, it might be very cute at cabinet, you might be very proud of yourself as a minister responsible, you might think you're doing a great thing, and, "Boy, we're finally going to do something to bring development to them First Nations," as they would see them. But I'm just saying, you're not doing them any favours. You're not doing First Nations any favours and you're not giving them the respect they're due when it comes to this process. We need to have a planning act that First Nations consent to. We need to have a planning act that reflects the value of the First Nations. We need to have a planning act that's developed in a timeline that works for First Nations so that they have the time to know what questions to ask, how to ask them and how to get the answers, and how to put it into legislation that works for them.

We need the time to be able to develop a revenue-sharing protocol of some type with the crown. Again, I don't argue new taxes; I argue doing something with existing taxes by which the province shares with First Nations; that we deal with the training issues so that First Nations are able to train their members so that they're able to get the jobs in the exploration companies, in the development and operation of those mines at all levels, from management to workers. There's a lot that needs to be done, and I think that in the end, we would all be better if we were to do this, because we do know there is huge potential in northern Ontario when it comes to mining in the Far North. We know there's huge potential when it comes to hydroelectric and forestry, to a certain degree. All of us here in Ontario can benefit by way of coming to the proper understanding with First Nations about how that's going to happen.

0940

If it takes another four or five years, so be it. Let's take the four or five years that are needed in order to negotiate what's right. In the end, all you're doing is you're forcing a product onto the First Nations that they're not going to see as their own, that they are not going to like, and you're inviting problems down the road where we will not have the kind of buy-in that we need by First Nations to move forward with development.

Those are the comments that I wanted to give in this particular debate. I just say to the government, shame on you for using time allocation on such an important bill. Shame on you for the amount of time that you're taking in developing this and not doing it in such a way that gives First Nations the type of say that they should have in an issue as important as this one.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Once again, we're speaking to a time allocation motion, and this one is on Bill 191, the Far North Act. Of course, the Liberal government has painted a picture of themselves with the Far North Act as the great consulters, the great open and transparent Liberal government who will sit down and consult with people before they bring in Bill 191, and then they bring in time allocation. There's nothing so deceptive as the obvious with this Liberal government.

This Liberal government, with time allocation, really demonstrates just how much contempt they hold for northern Ontario with this bill. They themselves know that everybody in the north opposes this bill the way it stands. I've read into this House resolutions from the NAN First Nation, resolutions opposing Bill 191, and I'd like to just read a little bit. This is the latest letter from NAN, signed by Grand Chief Beardy:

"As Bill 191 continues to be considered for second reading in session 2, Parliament 39" of Ontario, "the First Nations in NAN would like to remind you and other members of Parliament that they oppose the bill as it is currently written.

"NAN First Nations have been consistent in their opposition to the bill since it was first read and carried on June 2, 2009. NAN First Nations continue to oppose the bill even though the Standing Committee on General Government reviewed it and made amendments in October ... 2009."

Last summer, the committee went through the near north, listened to people, listened to First Nations, listened to municipalities, listened to industry. They were all opposed to Bill 191. The government and the opposition on that committee heard it clearly—we took deputations and delegations from across the north—and guess what? It was all just a facade with this Liberal government. Not one of those concerns has made it into second reading. There's the term "Hobson's choice." I guess we're going to have to change it to "the Liberal choice"

instead of "Hobson's choice," where you can take it or you can leave it, but the Liberals are just going to do it anyway. You can have all the appearance of the Liberals listening, all the appearance that they're concerned, but at the end of the day they do absolutely zero, nothing. Nothing was done from all those committee hearings through northern Ontario.

But I will say that there is that one person who does support this bill, other than the Liberal Party itself, and that is Monte Hummel of the World Wildlife Fund. He was consulted. He sat down with the Premier. They discussed Bill 191. They came up with their ideas. Bill 191 is the result of Monte Hummel's and the World Wildlife Fund's discussion with the Premier of this province.

It is absolutely atrocious that this Liberal government is now bringing in a time allocation motion to prevent further discussion and debate on Bill 191.

I find it interesting. I was listening to my colleague from Timmins–James Bay, who made some excellent points about Bill 191. He was on the committee hearings last year as well. As I was sitting here listening to the member from Timmins–James Bay, I cast my eyes over to the other side, and nobody in the Liberal benches was listening at all. I wouldn't mind if the cameras could show the other side of the House during this debate. It shows just how little regard the Liberal government and the Liberal members have for debate on northern Ontario. They're not interested; they don't care. As long as Monte Hummel is in favour of it, everything's good with these fellows.

But I have to mention that there are significant needs in northern Ontario. This government in Queen's Park needs to recognize that the north has received the short end of the stick from this government, and the stick that this government is giving to them is getting sharper.

Just to give a little background: Here we're going to lock off a quarter-million square kilometres of land. We're going to prevent any development on that land: any hydro development, any roads, any mines. On the rest of the land, we will allow development after these land use plans have been put in place. But a quarter-million square kilometres are going to be off limits for anybody and everybody.

I'd like to just ask the people who are listening in Ontario—and the people across the way, if they're listening—what would Ontario look like if Dalton McGuinty had been the first Premier of this province and had brought in a bill that locked off half of Ontario from development? Would this province even exist today, with a Dalton McGuinty Premier who locks off half of development? There's no way our province would have succeeded.

But now we're asking—we're not asking, we're demanding of the First Nations and the people of northern Ontario that we tie their hands behind their backs. We will not allow them to find value in the resources of northern Ontario on a quarter-million square kilometres of land. They will not find value in minerals. They will not find value in hydroelectric developments. They will not find value anywhere—in forestry; anywhere—because this government and Monte Hummel want to have a super-park in northern Ontario, a super-park named poverty and destitution. That will be the name of this Liberal park in northern Ontario. And 42%—a quarter-million square kilometres: no development, no homes, no cottages, no roads, no hydro; just a park of poverty that this Liberal government is creating in northern Ontario. At the same time that they talk the talk of the Ring of Fire, they walk the green walk with Monte Hummel. That's what this Liberal government is doing.

They talk of their open-door policies, and they're opening the doors for everybody to leave this province. There are no open doors of opportunities. It's opening the door to obstruction; opening the door to red tape; opening the door to government interference. Open the door and you'll find a vast emptiness, because no development will be happening in northern Ontario.

Absolutely, this will harm northern Ontario tremendously, but it will also have effects here as well. It will have effects in southern Ontario.

It really galls everyone as we watch the actions of this Liberal government, as we watch them refuse to listen to people, refuse to act on thoughtful reasoned amendments to the bill and refuse to do anything. Then they have their communications experts and spin doctors talk about how open and transparent they are and how consultative they are and that they would never do anything without consultation. It's just a facade. It's Morton's fork: take it or leave it. The Liberals are still going to get their way. They've got their majority, and they don't care.

It's much like the same tactics, the same strategy and the same process the Liberals used for their HST: "We're going to bring in this tax, even though we told you and we pledged an oath that we wouldn't increase taxes without going back to the people." They bring in a new tax. Whatever they want to do, they say one thing, and they do the other thing.

Of course, when the Progressive Conservatives get a deal with the Liberals to have a motion in this House to debate the HST, and they agree to it, as soon as we turn our backs, they renege on the deal, and they pull the motion off the floor, preventing people in this province from hearing debate on the HST.

That whole HST debacle that this government has brought forward—they're now trying replicate it even worse in the north with Bill 191. They're using the same process they did with the HST: cutting off debate, cutting off discussion, pretending to listen while at the same time they're conniving to get their way, to get through what's already there.

As I mentioned earlier to the member from Timmins–James Bay, there was no interest on the Liberal side of this House listening to the thoughtful comments from the member. This Liberal government is not interested in debate or discussion on anything. They have their own agenda. It is an agenda that Monte Hummel agrees with in the north. It's an agenda that creates the largest park of poverty and destitution in this Confederation, and they just don't care.

I would move that we have a motion to adjourn debate on Bill 191.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Hillier has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 0953 to 1015.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 46(a), I am now required to put the question. Mr. Hillier has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): The ayes are 0; the nays are 5.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The clock being past 10:15, I declare this House recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I would like to introduce the mother of page Lars Moffatt. She will be in the members' east gallery later on this afternoon. Dianna Stenland is from the beautiful municipality of Plummer Additional, which is a suburb of Bruce Mines.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please indulge me as I introduce members who are here to talk about developmental services in Ontario: Helene Jacobs, Cindy Mitchell, April Wells, Margaret Frame, Don Burroughs, Lind Armour, Bryan Shields, Janet Monahan, Pat Senft, Barbara Ostroff and her son Jeremiah, Jessie Poulton, Marty Graf, Cathy Parker, Tracy McGarry, Samantha Hillis, Carol Hunt, Melissa Jenkins, Nicky Jones, Hetty Ryan, Barbara Hooton, Odette Lawrence, Catherine Arthurs and her daughter Janis Jaffe-White, Linda Russell, Laza and her son Filip, Wilma Arthurs, Stacey Ryan and her daughter Sadler, Annette Haley and her son Lucas, Jan Burke-Gaffney, Judith McGill, Philippa Howell, Gail Fisher-Taylor and her son Kerr, Christy and Bill Barber and her daughter Nancy, Brodie Hart, Kathleen Hutchinson, Maureen Emmons, Keith Powell, Garry Cooke, and Gordon Kyle. I'm sure there are others, and I apologize if I have mispronounced any. I think it's important that people understand just how many parents and children are here.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to introduce some folks from my constituency and my staff: Beth Mackinnon, Afie Mardulchi, Aafaaq Shaikh, and Samantha Grant, a summer intern.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to introduce, in the opposition gallery today, some people who came here from the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario: Dean McCabe, from the Association of Condominium Managers; Jennifer Webb is a condo property manager; Dawn Rogers is a condo property manager; Martha Lippa is a condo property manager; and Laurel McCorriston is a condo property manager.

Also joining us today is Penny Simmons of Penny Loafers Shoe Shine Co., which will see an 8% HST tax hike come July 1. She's here today to make sure that the McGuinty government is being held to account on that.

Mme France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to welcome one more time at Queen's Park the members of the Yellow Shirt Brigade from Niagara, especially Sue Salzer and all of her friends. Welcome to Queen's Park, ladies.

Mr. Charles Sousa: On behalf of our esteemed colleague, I would like to acknowledge residents from his riding of Oakville who have concerns about their local air quality. I would like to recognize representatives of Citizens for Clean Air in attendance today, along with the mayor of Haldimand county, Her Worship Marie Trainer; and the mayor of Oakville, His Worship Rob Burton.

Hon. Margarett R. Best: It's my pleasure to welcome to the Legislature this morning my constituent Mr. William Burch, from the riding of Scarborough–Guildwood, in the members' east gallery.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce my good friends Rod and Marnie Barlow, who are here to express some of their concerns with respect to the developmental services sector as well today. Welcome.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's my privilege today to introduce Alexandra Wilkinson, who is here with us. She's my summer student. She goes to Western. She's doing a fantastic job, and she wanted to come and see how the House runs today.

Mr. Charles Sousa: I would also like to welcome, soon to the public gallery, 16 members of the folklore group known as Pauliteiros de Duas Igrejas from Miranda do Douro, located in the north of Portugal. They were the headline performers at the Portugal pavilion at Mississauga's Festival of Cultures during Carassauga's 25th anniversary last weekend. They will be joining in this year's Portugal Week festivities.

I urge everyone to join us this Saturday to see these wonderful dancers perform at the Portugal Day parade.

Bem vindo ao Ontario, Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and page Emma Allen to welcome her father, Peter Allen, to the members' gallery today.

We have with us in the Speakers' gallery today a very special delegation from the Sultanate of Oman, led by His Excellency Dr. Yahya bin Mahfoodh Al Manthri, chairman of the state council. The delegation is accompanied today by the non-resident ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Canada, Her Excellency Hunaina Sultan Ahmed Al Mughairy.

Please join me in welcoming all of our guests to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, if you would permit me to do one more introduction, my summer interns Kayla Palmateer, Peter Swanstrom and Samantha Smitiuch are here with us today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Acting Premier—I want to first welcome the Yellow Shirt Brigade to the Legislature here today, tireless advocates for health care in Fort Erie and Port Colborne.

Sadly, the Yellow Shirt Brigade has witnessed the closure of the 24-hour ER in Fort Erie under Dalton McGuinty. Then Dalton McGuinty hid behind the veils of his LHIN to justify this cut in health care. To add insult to injury, André Marin, the Ombudsman, did an investigation of LHIN decision-making in Hamilton and Niagara, and you've buried that in this circus of a show that you put the Ombudsman through these last number of months.

I ask the Acting Premier: Will you do the right thing? Will you reopen the 24-hour ER in Fort Erie? If you don't, a PC government will.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I guess the campaign has begun. The pledge to flatline or cut health care is now augmented by a promise to open an emergency department.

But in any case, let me first of all welcome the members of the Yellow Shirt Brigade. One thing I've learned in my time as Minister of Health is how passionate the people of Ontario are about their health care system, and no one exemplifies that more than the Yellow Shirt Brigade. Thank you for being here once again.

When it comes to our health care system, the vitally important thing is that we offer the very best health care to people as close to home as possible. What that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, with all due respect, instead of giving platitudes to the Yellow Shirt Brigade, give them the answer they want. Just tell them that you're going to reopen the 24-hour ER at Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie. Just cut to the chase.

They're also here today because the Ombudsman has completed his investigation into your unaccountable, unelected, largely anonymous LHIN Liberal appointees. Seventeen weeks ago he handed it off to the Premier, and you have put him through an incredible sham—a three-ring circus of a process, smearing his reputation, with Dalton McGuinty's team engaging in an unprecedented whisper campaign. You've avoided the mandated review of your LHIN process and you've unleashed attack dogs like Warren Kinsella to personally attack the Ombudsman.

Minister, will you release today the Ombudsman's report on the LHINs so we can get to the bottom of why you closed—

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite knows full well that the Ombudsman will release his report whenever the Ombudsman decides to release his report. The member knows that.

When it comes to health care, as I was saying, we are determined to build the very best high-quality health care system that we possibly can, providing care as close to home as possible, as quickly as possible, at the highest possible quality. Having said that, there are times when the best possible care is not available in the home community hospital.

We have looked at the situation in Niagara very closely; the LHIN has. We brought in Dr. Jack Kitts from Ottawa to have another look at the decisions around health care in the Niagara region. The overwhelming consensus among those who looked seriously at health care policy—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The arrogance of the Liberal government after six and a half years in office shows no bounds. You blame André Marin for the lack of the release of the LHIN report when you are sitting on it, and you've put him through a three-ring circus of a reappointment process. You've engaged your Liberal attack dogs, like Warren Kinsella, in an ugly whisper campaign. You've smeared the reputation of the Ombudsman and tried to bury the report.

I ask you, Minister—it's very clear how to proceed today—will you just cut to the chase? Will you reappoint André Marin, set aside your smear campaign, and then release that LHIN report immediately to see why Dalton McGuinty tried to close the ERs in Fort Erie and Port Colborne?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite continues with his drive-by smear campaign of our local health integration networks. This leader of the opposition, this man who aspires to be the Premier of this province, has been to communities across this province and has not even taken the time to talk to people who work in health care. What he has done is he has driven up, parked at the podium in front of the hospital and completely discredited the people who are making our health care system as strong as they can. I think it's time that this member started to take health care in this province seriously.

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Acting Premier: Not only are people in the Yellow Shirt Brigade and other seniors across the province losing access to key ER services like in Fort Erie and Port Colborne, they're

worried about the impact of the HST in one month's time. The HST greedy tax grab kicks in on Canada Day. Today marks the beginning of Seniors' Month, and how is Dalton McGuinty celebrating? Well, not in the Legislature today. He's interested in punishing seniors—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the honourable member that we don't make reference to the attendance of members.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier is putting a new tax on mutual funds, which means less income in retirement. He's putting a new tax on condo fees, 8% on gas for their cars, snow removal, lawn care, home repairs, Internet, entertainment etc.

Why is the Premier closing down ER services and also raising the taxes on seniors in their retirement?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know my colleague is going to want to comment on the HST.

I want to just make a comment, first of all, about what we have done for seniors, because the member opposite is saying that this government has not paid attention to the needs of seniors, and that is not true.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Acting Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The most recent example that this party is not supportive of the initiatives we've put in place to help seniors is that they are in opposition to reducing the price of generic drugs. We are working very hard to make sure that seniors get the medications they need at a price that's reasonable, and the party opposite is not supportive of that.

On top of creating 8,000 new long-term-care beds, creating a new Ontario sales tax for seniors, doubling the Ontario home property tax for seniors, we have got a basket of measures to support seniors. The party opposite has not supported any one of those.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The minister asks what you've done to seniors. Well, Minister, you've closed the ERs for seniors in Niagara. You're bent on closing down community pharmacies and interrupting that dependent relationship between seniors and their community pharmacists. Now you're putting in smart meters that say to seniors, who have fought in the wars, who helped us through the Depression, who have built this great province, "Well, too bad. Wash your clothes at 11 p.m. Do your dishes at 10 p.m. We don't care."

The PC Party does not share that view, and we will continue to stand up and fight for seniors in this province.

What happens on Canada Day? A new tax on home heating, energy conservation retrofits, taking the dog or cat to the vet, cable, haircuts, vitamins. How much more can seniors take in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario? Won't the minister please stand up and say you're not going to go through with this massive tax—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Acting Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to say to the seniors of Ontario—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I realize that this is the last week. Many members may want to be out of here earlier. I would be very happy to help facilitate an early exit for them.

Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Millions of seniors and millions of Ontarians are going to receive billions of dollars over the next year courtesy of our agreement with the federal government. The PC Party voted against that. On July 1, seniors will receive their enhanced property tax credit. We're doubling that credit, a credit that you voted against in the first place, and you voted against the doubling. That is for seniors. And then there are many seniors who, in August, will start to qualify for the new Ontario HST rebate that your party voted against.

Let's make sure the seniors know the whole story on this file. Yes, indeed, we are reforming our tax system. This side of the House has a plan to create 600,000 more jobs in this province, and your side of the House doesn't. Seniors rely on their public services. It requires a vibrant economy, an economy like Ontario leading Canada and leading in the world—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Dalton McGuinty is punishing Ontario seniors with his HST tax grab on hotel stays, gas for their cars, gym memberships and dry cleaning. The auditor's report today shows that Liberal insiders at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. racked up millions of dollars expensing the same items: hotels, cars, limousines, spa visits, clothing, lavish hospitality. So when seniors want to see the local community play, you're going to nail them with the HST increase while your friends at the OLG go to see Detroit luxury suites, the Air Canada Centre, season's tickets etc., running up the bills. Why do you have one rule for Liberal insiders and a different rule for hard-working retired Ontario seniors?

Hon. John Wilkinson: The Minister of Finance would be eager to answer that question.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I am delighted that we have changed the expense policies that were put in place by the government you were a part of. That member, when he was a minister, expensed $1,000 a month for alcohol and partying—more than any of the officials covered by this.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Halton.

I think it's important to remind all members that when we are either asking questions or answering questions, we in no way start to bring in attacks on individual members.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We took action last year and addressed the problems before the auditor's report. I called the auditor in to do this.

The other point I would make is that those changes—the new board, the new executives we brought in are cleaning this up. We welcome the auditor. We asked him to do this. He did a thorough report. We're delighted with the findings. We've taken the right steps with Paul Godfrey and the new board to make sure none of this happens again.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. With the HST now 30 days away, families are figuring out the changes that they're going to have to make to adjust. Roger Davidson of Toronto writes this:

"Two years ago I lost my business of 42 years at Chrysler. At 62, I finally got a job and am barely scratching by every month. This HST will cost me $196 per month.... It looks like our son will no longer be able to either play hockey or golf."

1050

With people like Mr. Davidson already struggling for a good job and decent pay, how is a new tax on everything from heating to hockey going to help him?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I would encourage Mr. Davidson not to go to the NDP website to find out what's changing but actually go to the government's website at ontario.ca/taxchange, where some two million Ontarians have actually gone to get the facts on which things are changing and which things are not. Some 83% of things will see no change in sales tax. It is true that there will be a change in regard to 17% of things—broadly speaking, energy and services—but by going to that website, you get to understand, especially for Mr. Davison, all of the tax benefits that are particularly geared for those people who are struggling; for example, the new Ontario sales tax benefit, the fact that this individual, of course, will qualify for the transitional payment as well, and the fact that we have reduced his income tax on the first. Again, as someone who is almost a senior, there will be other benefits that he will qualify for when he turns 65. It's important to get the whole story out—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I've heard from many more Ontarians. Nancy McSloy writes this: "According to my calculation, the HST is going to cost us an extra $94 per month, or $1,128 per year. Last year, I lost my job.... My husband lost his job in November.... Any extra expense is a hardship."

Marcella Lico of Hamilton adds, "If you could kindly let Mr. McGuinty know that we are in a recession, [and] although making a steady recovery, there are many of us who have not had a pay increase in more than two years or, even worse, are unemployed."

Why is the McGuinty government making people like Mrs. Lico and Ms. McSloy, who are already worried about their jobs and their incomes, pay an average of $800 more each and every year?

Hon. John Wilkinson: There's the contrast. You're talking about people who have troubles because of a recession, which we're now getting over, and the fact that they don't have jobs. On this side of the House, we have a plan to create 600,000 jobs over the next 10 years. Your party doesn't have a plan.

I say to the people who have been affected by the recession—through no fault of their own—that your government understands that. That's exactly why we're reforming our taxes: so there are more jobs. That's what those people want more than anything else.

To ensure that those people with the least, including those people who are suffering from unemployment, are looked after, we have done a number of things. For example, when it comes to their income, we cut their income tax so we have the lowest income tax rate of any province in Canada on the first $37,000. I know that those individuals will be receiving tax-free transition cheques. I also know that if they're struggling—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The McGuinty HST is going to cost families in northern Ontario big bucks. Tom and Heather Brignall from Dryden write this: "We have our house for sale, ready to move to Manitoba. It's hard enough to heat our home now. With the added tax, what are we supposed to do? We can't cut back on heat! How will that help our economy in northwestern Ontario?"

Lorri Foley from Sault Ste. Marie adds, "We ... have children living abroad, and any increase in costs for air travel will definitely reduce our ability to visit them. It is already difficult to do so, living in northern Ontario.... "

Can the Acting Premier explain to people like the Brignalls and Mrs. Foley how a new tax on everything helps create jobs and grow prosperity in northern Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Only NDP math would think that 17% is everything. I say to the member, if they went to the website they would understand that when that individual wants to see their loved ones outside of this country, there is no change in tax. It's exactly that kind of pernicious statement of what they consider to be fact which is causing concern for Ontarians, and I think they'll understand after July 1.

I say that we've taken special care, because of the leadership of our northern caucus, to have a new energy rebate for up in the north.

To the question of Manitoba and Ontario, on July 1, the marginal effective rate on new investment in this province will be half of what it is in Manitoba. I think that leads to a brighter future for northern Ontario as we take the steps to make sure that we're even more competitive.

This is all about the fact that in the north and throughout Ontario, we need more jobs. They're coming, but it's

because we're showing the leadership and understanding of what we need—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My second question again is to the Acting Premier. Ontario seniors, too, are going to feel the HST squeeze very soon. Darlene Wright of Barrie writes this: "The HST will affect me by about $500 per year. As a single, 60-year-old senior lady on a fixed income, I currently work two part-time retail jobs to pay my living expenses. It's impossible to find full-time work at my age.... I may have to take on a third part-time job just to pay the HST."

Rosanne Delorme from Peterborough writes this: "I calculated the HST will cost our family of two seniors on a fixed income an extra $1,122 a year."

After devoting a lifetime to building our province, how is the new tax on turning the lights on going to help seniors through their retirement years?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Revenue will want to comment in the supplementary, but I just want to make the statement that we are very, very aware and we were aware when we put our package of tax reforms in place that there were certain people who needed to be protected. That was part of the plan. That is why there are special provisions in place to protect seniors. That's why 93% of people in the province are going to get a tax reduction. That's why the Ontario sales tax credit is in place, which will affect seniors. That's why the Ontario property tax credit will benefit seniors.

I think the assumption and the implication by the third party that this was a plan that did not take into account seniors is absolutely flawed and needs to be corrected.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This Acting Premier knows very well that even with the credits and even with the income tax changes she's talking about, seniors will still be worse off under the HST, as will every single Ontarian.

Here's what Ontarians who own small businesses are saying. Farid Larson writes, "I have a small dry cleaning store. With the HST coming, our dying business will be gone for sure."

Neveen Dominic of Windsor says, "As a small business owner ... it is devastating to me. I cannot increase my prices to make ends meet and I am most likely to go out of business if change is not made urgently."

Joe Cosentino adds this: "As a small service-oriented business owner, my customers have already expressed concern over the additional HST that they will be paying and they have already cut back or cancelled their services."

Why should Ontario families believe the new $800 tax is going to create jobs when small business owners like the ones I've just quoted say that it's not—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Acting Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Then why does the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which represent small business, say the single most important thing we can do is to actually bring in a harmonized sales tax and reform our income tax system? All of the businesses that you've mentioned, on July 1, are going to receive input tax credits at 13% for the very first time.

I say to businesses, and I come from small business, as so many members of our caucus do, that it is important to look at the bigger picture. Yes, there is going to be a change in regard to sales tax. We're actually going to have one in this province instead of two. We're not going to have two governments tripping over themselves trying to tax the same thing twice when once will do. That's exactly what we do with income tax.

There are people that say that we should embrace the status quo, but the cost of business in Ontario is going down on July 1.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The CFIB did a survey of the membership, and over 60% said they see no value or benefit whatsoever in the HST; 85% of the Toronto area BIA's membership does not support the implementation of the HST.

Now I'm sharing stories of real Ontarians because the McGuinty government has obviously refused to listen. The HST will make life more expensive, and people are justifiably worried.

Claude McMahon from Guelph writes: "Our family expenses will increase by $959."

Jenn Young adds, "I, as a single working parent, would suffer quite a bit from the new HST tax. I struggle to pay my bills and provide for my son as it is. I have been hit pretty hard this year.... If things get any tighter for me, I will have to get another job and totally miss my son growing up."

People like Ms. Young and Mr. McMahon deserve an answer from this government. How is taking money out of their already stretched budgets actually going to help them?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Let's just be clear: We're putting money in the pockets of people. There are millions of Ontarians who will receive billions of dollars tax-free in the next year alone. There are millions of Ontarians who are, today, benefiting from a tax cut that we brought in on January 1. There are millions of Ontarians who are going to benefit from our new tax credits, which come into effect on July 1. So, it is important to look at the whole picture.

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I know that if people go to a partisan website that is factually incorrect, people are going to draw incorrect assumptions.

Again, I always tell people that this is a government that understands we need 600,000 more jobs in this province, we need $47 billion worth of new investment,

we need $30 billion more income a year in this province, and that's why we're moving forward. Take a look at the whole picture—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: To the Acting Premier: Dalton McGuinty's HST on condominium fees will make housing less affordable for Ontario seniors and families. Members of the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario, who are here with us today, advocate for seniors and families who will have to pay Dalton McGuinty's HST tax grab. They tell us that many seniors already live on a fixed income. Families tell us that up to half of their take-home pay is going to the mortgage, the condo fee and property taxes.

What does Dalton McGuinty expect seniors and families to sacrifice when he starts taxing them more on July 1?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: There is no HST on condominium fees or on rents for people.

I know that the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. The members from Nepean and Bruce and Lanark, and the Minister of the Environment.

Minister.

Hon. John Wilkinson: So let's put that canard to rest.

The second thing we have to look at is, the condo managers are here, and we welcome you to Queen's Park. Your responsibility is to provide the very best value for your residents.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the member to withdraw the comment he just made.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm learning lots of new words in this role.

Hon. John Wilkinson: That's good. It is a duck, Mr. Speaker.

I say to the managers, you've been entrusted by your residents to get the best value. For those companies that will have to charge your condominium corporation more money, their cost of business is going down.

I know that if I was in a condominium, I would expect my condominium manager to get the best value. Also, it's important to understand that the residents themselves have an enhanced property tax credit, some $270 million because of the work of the Minister of Finance. For those who are seniors, they are receiving an enhanced property tax credit as well—all designed to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: The minister should not split words. It would behoove him not to split words and know that condo fees will go up because of all the maintenance costs and everything else that gets rolled into them.

Dalton McGuinty's HST on condo fees is not the only way you're punishing seniors. According to the Ontario Home Care Association, seniors will pay $315 a year more for Dalton McGuinty's HST on home care. That's a hard number. Because you haven't created any long-term-care beds, seniors are forced to look at retirement homes as an alternative. Operators say that HST will add to the cost of utilities, renovations, maintenance and nursing attendant care.

Why is Dalton McGuinty punishing seniors with his HST?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Seniors have been around a long time, and they're pretty sharp. They understand that there are two things they need to take into account: which things are going to be affected by a change in sales tax, and what the benefits are that they each personally receive from our tax reform in regard to income.

I remind seniors that the vast majority of them will be receiving a tax-fee transitional cheque in June, December and next June; that they have, if they have income, already received a personal income tax cut that came in in January; that seniors who are struggling because of low income will be qualifying for the Ontario sales tax benefit, which is in addition to the GST rebate.

I know that when seniors take a look at the big question, they understand that our world has changed. They understand that they are, more than others, dependent on high-quality public services, and that we cannot have those high-quality public services if we have chronically high unemployment. That's why our government has taken this step to ensure that there is plenty of employment in this province. People paying—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

RETIREMENT HOMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Acting Premier. The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, the Firefighters Association of Ontario, the Ontario fire marshal, the National Fire Protection Association and three separate coroner's reports have all called for mandatory sprinkler systems in every retirement home in Ontario.

Today is the first day of Seniors' Month in Ontario—a good day for this government to take decisive action to protect our seniors from the horrors of fire in their retirement homes. Will Dalton McGuinty's Liberals show Ontario's seniors that their safety really matters, and before the Legislature rises this summer will they legislate mandatory sprinkler systems in all Ontario retirement homes?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the minister responsible for seniors, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I believe he asked the same question just about 10 days ago, and the answer will be, again, the same. For the first time ever, if the Legislature passes it, we will have retirement home legislation that will provide strong protections for safety and care in retirement homes. I've indicated to the member that one

of the considerations, as we develop the regulations around safety, is sprinklers. I've indicated that we will be consulting over the months ahead—assuming the legislation passes—on this issue. This is exactly the same answer I gave him a week and a half ago. We're determined to ensure that we provide the appropriate level of safety for our seniors living in retirement homes, and for the first time ever we're going to have legislation to permit retirement homes to be regulated and licensed.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary? The member from Nickel Belt.

Mme France Gélinas: To the Acting Premier: I think this government has missed the mark with Bill 21, whether it be safety or accountability, and I am not alone. The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, the Ontario Health Coalition, CUPE, ONA, RNAO, OPSEU—they've all taken the very unusual step of writing to each member of this Parliament and asking them to vote against Bill 21. Why? Because they are frustrated and alarmed that this government is rushing through a fundamentally flawed piece of legislation that will leave our seniors more vulnerable after this bill than they are now. This government has made it clear that it will not listen. I've put forward 92 amendments, and they've turned them all down. We will be stuck with this unaccountable authority, so I will ask for one change: Will they agree to put a cap on the amount of care in retirement homes?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: Again, you say it's legislation that has real problems, but then you've got one suggestion. Let me just say again, this legislation is the result of four years. We've had consultations in 13 communities, we have had a substantial debate here in the Legislature, and I might add the NDP voted—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members will come to order, please. They understand that if they're not satisfied with an answer, the provisions of the standing orders allow them to call for a late show.

Mr. Paul Miller: It's absolutely disgusting.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

It's not helpful, the shots from the government side.

Minister?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: This bill is a result of extensive consultations over four years, and I repeat for the public listening and watching this right now: We've had debate here in the Legislature; the NDP voted at second reading for this legislation. So I would just say to all of us, for the first time ever in the history of the province we are going to license and regulate retirement homes. No other party has done that. We're going to do that, and we're going to do it with a bill that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Charles Sousa: My question is to the Minister of Revenue. Ontario businesses can no longer rely on a low dollar, and our current tax system is a huge disadvantage, as it taxes the investments businesses need to grow. Groups like the Ontario Chamber of Commerce have said moving to the HST eliminates hidden but real tax, ultimately saving money and making businesses more competitive. The HST has the support of groups ranging from leaders in business, such as Telus and Bell Canada, and is also supported by poverty advocates such as the Daily Bread Food Bank, because it will benefit low-income-earners and create jobs. This is a serious issue dealing with the economic future of Ontario, yet some have expressed concern that the needed tax reform is occurring too soon. How important is it that Ontario implement the HST now?

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Hon. John Wilkinson: We need those jobs right now. There's encouraging news from the economy that there are jobs coming back, and we welcome that.

I think fair-minded people understand that the world has changed. I agree with the member: I don't think it's wise for us to have an economic policy based on the fact that the dollar somehow is going to go back to 64 cents or that somehow the price of a barrel of oil is going to go down.

I think businesses and, increasingly, people understand that in the 21st century, we're going to have to do things differently—not the way we did it in the 20th century, but in the 21st century. We have to enter the modern age and make sure that our businesses are on a competitive playing field with so many other jurisdictions, where we compete every day for jobs. We're trying to land jobs right here in our province. We cannot have high-quality public services and chronically high unemployment. That's why we've taken the step, working in partnership with the federal government, to reform our taxes, not just the sales tax but—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Charles Sousa: The Conference Board of Canada released their quarterly provincial outlook report this week. The report states that Ontario will lead all other provinces in economic growth at 3.8% this year, and next year by 3.7%.

TD Bank has released a report which states that the majority of businesses' cost savings will be passed on to consumers; 80% of consumer expenditures will see no change in tax; and 80% of savings will be passed on immediately.

Bell Canada has said that the implementation of a single sales tax structure in 2010 means Bell can accelerate its investments in the province next year.

Minister, the HST means good jobs in my riding and across Ontario. What do you say to the Conservatives and NDP who oppose the creation of 600,000 good new jobs?

Hon. John Wilkinson: It's interesting: We live in a world where Ontario in 2010 has a government that has a plan to help create 600,000 more jobs as the result of $47

billion of more investment and $30 billion of more income.

Our opposition parties don't have a plan. They're opposed to our plan; I get that. But the interesting thing is, they don't have an alternative plan. What they're telling us to do is: Do nothing. I refer to them as the do-nothing opposition because they are wedded to the status quo, even though the world itself has changed.

That's why we've taken the step, working in partnership with the federal government, to fundamentally reform our tax system so that we have just one value-added sales tax in the province of Ontario and we dramatically reduce personal and corporate income taxes in this province.

It's important because our children are going to need jobs in the 21st century, and a 20th-century taxation system is—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Wilma and Chris Arthurs of Bright's Grove have accepted the responsibility of providing daily support for their daughter Emilia for the past 19 years. Emilia requires 24-hour care, as she suffers seizures in the middle of the night.

The Arthurs know that when Emilia completes school, she will face a long wait-list for a group home; 110 other people are currently on a wait-list for residential services through Lambton County Developmental Services.

The Arthurs family is here today, Minister, along with many other families in similar situations. When can they expect action on eliminating wait-lists for residential placements, Passports, special services at home? You name it: They're waiting.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you for the question.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We certainly welcome all of our guests to come to the chamber and observe. As much as you may want to participate in the debate, you can only observe, so applause is not appropriate.

Minister?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me welcome to the House the Arthurs family and thank them for being such good advocates for their daughter Emilia.

What I can say to the member opposite is that since 2003, this government has invested a lot of money to help people with developmental disabilities and to also help create spaces to welcome these individuals in group homes.

I know that there are a lot of people waiting out there to have a place in a group home and residence. But in the meantime, what we have done is we have invested money in the Passport program. We have created that Passport program, and the Passport program is very popular.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: In fact, this government broke its promise to increase funding by 2% to Community Living, one of the major agencies that helps people, so a bad situation is only getting worse.

Rod and Marnie Barlow are here today with us in the gallery. Their son Richard, who has an intellectual disability, is trying to live as independently as possible in the community but is still heavily reliant upon the services provided by the supported independent living program at Community Living. Until recently, Richard received three visits per week from his support worker, but as of April 6, four of the eight support workers were laid off from this program.

Richard will now receive an average of 19 minutes per week from his worker. This won't even begin to cover Richard's basic needs—cooking and cleaning—without even considering the social needs. The fact is, he spends most of his time alone in his apartment listening to music.

Minister, what would you say to these parents who are desperately worried about their son—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: What I can say is, again, that this government has invested half a billion dollars to strengthen and expand its service. Almost half of this investment—$240 million—has been committed to agency base increases and wage enhancement for front-line workers. We increased agency base budgets by 10% over the last three years. We have invested $246 million since 2003. We have committed $110 million in funding to help adults with developmental disabilities. We have created 2,500 spaces since we came to power. As I said, we have created the Passport program. We are helping 2,300 families.

I want to thank all our partners in the community, Community Living and all other partners, who are helping our—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, you're currently changing the system by which school bus contracts are awarded in this province. Your new RFP process to date has had the effect of pushing out small, locally owned bus companies in favour of larger corporate entities and/or multinational school bus companies.

Minister, why are you implementing an RFP system that has the effect of shutting down locally owned businesses?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What I would say to the honourable member is that what we are trying to do with

respect to supporting boards in the provision of transportation is to ensure that we have a transparent, open and accountable process that provides those services.

Up until now, for the most part, I think it's fair to say that those transportation services have been engaged on basically a sole-source contract arrangement. What we are working on with boards and with the School Bus Operators' Association of Ontario is a way that boards can engage these important services in a way that is fair and that ensures that we get the best service for the best price.

We have implemented some pilots in the province of Ontario. We are examining the results of those pilots—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, the effect of the pilots is pretty clear. In the case of Wellington and Dufferin, there were 439 routes that were put up, and only 22 of them went to the locally owned businesses.

I say to you again: Why would the government of Ontario have a policy that says, "We're going to favour multinationals over locally owned businesses"? I say to you again: Why are you favouring a system that, at the end of the day, is going to put out of business people who have been working hard in this province for 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 years in favour of large multinationals that do not have the same interests here in Ontario?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, when the pilots were under way—I know that the honourable member is choosing those numbers; it suits his purpose. But it's more accurate to report that, as a result of pilot initiative, what we found is that there were winners and losers. What is accurate to say is that some of the winners were the small, single one- and two-bus operators, and some of the winners were larger businesses. Again, the losers: Some were one- and two-bus operators, but also some were larger businesses.

We continue to work with the School Bus Operators' Association of Ontario to understand how we can work with them. Of course, the priority for all of us is to ensure that our children are transported in a safe, efficient manner. Then we say to the parents and to the taxpayers of Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

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RETIREMENT HOMES

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is for the minister responsible for seniors. Minister, in 2007 you were the first MPP to visit my riding. By coincidence, that day we visited a retirement home in my community. At that time we made a commitment to work hard to improve standards for retirement homes, and I'm so happy about the introduction of Bill 21 because we are delivering on our promise. For the first time in the history of the province, Ontario is proposing legislative protections for seniors living in retirement homes.

Ontario seniors have been calling for regulations for many years. However, some are suggesting that the legislation be delayed for more consultations.

Minister, can you tell this House if you are planning to delay this important legislation?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I thank the member for the thoughtful question.

The comment really is, has the bill been broadly consulted? I'd just say to the public and to the members of the Legislature, we promised to do this in 2006. We visited 13 communities in 2007. We have consulted extremely broadly on it. We introduced the legislation in March. We had thorough debate here in the Legislature in April. We had unanimous support at second reading for the bill. The bill was then referred to a committee. They scheduled two days of public hearings. They heard—

Mr. Paul Miller: You took one amendment out of 90.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Sorry, Minister. The member from Hamilton East will please come to order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Stop picking on him.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That's not helpful, the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Minister.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: Two days of public hearings were scheduled, but everybody was accommodated in one day and the second day was cancelled.

I'd just say to those who have raised concerns about the bill, I believe their concerns have been addressed in the bill because of very broad consultation over several years.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Minister, this is such an important issue for many reasons, but perhaps most important because Ontario's senior population is expected to double to nearly 4.1 million within 25 years. We need to ensure that seniors and their families have the right information; they need to make informed decisions about their care.

Questions have been raised about parts of this legislation. One concern is the use of restraints in retirement homes. Some have also expressed concerns about the governance of the organizations that will license and inspect retirement homes.

Minister, all members of this House want to ensure that the rights of seniors in retirement homes are protected in the bill. How are these concerns addressed in the bill?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: The member did raise a couple of issues that have been raised with me. There has been a comment that this is a self-regulating board. That is not true. It is a regulatory authority; not self-regulated. We, the government, appoint the chair; we appoint three additional members to the board; and we, the government, have to approve the bylaw for the selection of the other board members. This is not going to be a self-regulated

board. It has the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the legislation.

On the use of restraints, which was your second issue, there's an absolute prohibition in the bill against the use of restraints. In fact, we amended the bill to even clarify it further. If you check page 37 of the bill, it says restraints are prohibited.

So I think—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Acting Premier: The one-month countdown to the HST begins today. The HST obviously hasn't been implemented yet, and Dalton McGuinty is already salivating over a new carbon tax. Yesterday, your environment minister said, "A carbon tax is something to look at." We all know what that means when a McGuinty Liberal says it.

Why is Dalton McGuinty going down the road of Stéphane Dion's Green Shift greedy carbon tax?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, we appreciate the report that the Environmental Commissioner has done. It's always extremely important to hear from someone who takes an independent look at all the various actions that government is taking with respect to our climate change program, and certainly we thank him for that. We will be working with all of the recommendations that he has made in the report.

I should also remind you, though, that he said some very, very positive things about—and if I can find it here, I will tell you. He said that he supports "the government's current initiatives involving a cap-and-trade system." He also says that the report also contains "a key recommendation designed to ensure that Ontario"—and this is the crucial word—"continues to show leadership in the areas of GHG target setting."

He feels we're on the right way. We've still got a long way to go, and we look forward to working with that party, now that they're interested in the environment, to make sure that we can reduce our greenhouse—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Ontario seniors and families already pay a fuel tax. A month from now, Dalton McGuinty will make them pay HST on gasoline as well. We saw all of the Liberal caucus giving rousing ovations to Jeff Rubin when he proposed a carbon tax. The member from Toronto Centre is tweeting his support.

The new tax grabs that the Liberals are eyeballing don't stop with your carbon tax. You're also looking at a new health tax, a tap water tax, road tolls and restricting seniors' access to the public drug plan. How much more do the McGuinty Liberals think Ontario seniors and families can afford to pay?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Since it contained so many issues, I'd better refer this to the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I told the House yesterday that these are tax matters. They'll be dealt with in a budget.

I think what we all want to know is why they voted against a personal tax cut for Ontario's lowest-income seniors. Why, sir, did you vote against doubling the seniors' property tax credit? Why did you vote against a policy that will make our corporate tax rates the most competitive in the country? Why did you vote against a policy that will lower the marginal effective tax—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members from Bruce, Halton and Oxford.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Double mention for Bruce.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I just say to the voters of Ontario that that question is nothing but a Tory story. Let's focus on the policies before us. Let's build a stronger economy and create jobs for our children and our grandchildren so that they will have the same quality of life that our parents left us with.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, the independent review of the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act was tabled. Five years ago, the McGuinty government made a commitment to a fully accessible Ontario, but yesterday we learned that Ontario is not on track to meet its 20-year target. Instead, the implementation of the AODA is falling behind because of a complete lack of leadership, coordination and enforcement.

When will this government adopt the recommendations in the independent review?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me thank Charles Beer for his report. We asked for this independent review, and I want to thank him for the good report that he wrote. A lot of his recommendations—we're already in progress to accomplish them.

I am very proud of what this government has done with regard to accessibility in Ontario. We have developed the standards in four areas, and we are working on the built environment. You will understand, Mr. Speaker, that the built environment is more challenging, but we have slowed down the process, at the request of the disabled community, who wanted to be more involved and to have time to review what we are proposing—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The government had the last three months to study this report. The recommendations that advocates are telling us they want to see prioritized are simply common sense. They are: Designate a min-

istry and a deputy minister responsible for disability issues, so some leadership actually can take place on this issue, and create a clear process of enforcement.

Is this government prepared to get serious about meeting its disability targets and implementing all of the recommendations in that report, or will it sit back as Ontario falls further and further behind in achieving its goals of full accessibility by 2025?

1130

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I can assure the House that we are in a good position to be fully accessible by 2025. I want to thank all of those who helped us to develop standards. We have hundreds of people sitting on this committee to help us to develop the standards.

It's very easy for the leader of the third party to talk about accessibility, but what did they do when they were in power? Nothing. They're now here to criticize instead of helping all of us to make sure that it works.

We will be on time. Before the end of this year, the five standards will be in place. We're very proud of the progress we have made. Again, thanks to everyone who helped us in that endeavour.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. Yesterday was World No Tobacco Day. It is a day that serves to remind us of the dangers of exposure to tobacco smoke and an opportunity for governments and anti-smoking groups alike to get the word out.

Here in Ontario, we have the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which is one of the most comprehensive anti-tobacco initiatives on the continent, but there is always more work to be done, especially when it comes to protecting our youth from smoke. Minister, can you tell this House what the government is planning to do to combat youth smoking?

Hon. Margarett R. Best: I want to take this opportunity to thank the member from Ottawa–Orléans for his question. I want to say to this House that yesterday I announced that our government is investing more than $4.7 million in a number of new youth anti-smoking initiatives, including engaging young people through the province's 36 public health units to oversee and be resources for youth tobacco control activities. This is going on in communities across the province, engaging youth in grassroots programs through Ontario's seven tobacco control area networks. We are providing grants for young people to plan and implement creative initiatives for their peers that promote a smoke-free lifestyle. This is about peer-to-peer empowerment.

There is more to do; we know that. That is why we are developing, with our stakeholders, a new—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased that this government recognizes the need to engage youth on the dangers of smoking. Tobacco is still the number one cause of preventable disease and death in Ontario, killing over 13,000 Ontarians every year. The cost of tobacco use goes beyond the $1.6 billion in direct health care costs: 500,000 hospital days and $4.4 billion in productivity losses. There are also the costs to family and friends who must witness loved ones suffer and die of cancer or heart disease.

We know that youth—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable members will please come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is not helpful, government House leader.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, it's not helpful coming back from both sides.

Please continue.

Mr. Phil McNeely: We know that youth are one of the most vulnerable groups at risk to pick up this deadly habit. Can the minister tell this House the government's progress thus far in preventing youth from starting to smoke?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Carleton, please come to order.

Minister?

Hon. Margarett R. Best: As I was saying before, we're continuing to work with our stakeholders to develop a new five-year strategy to combat tobacco—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to hear the answer, but it's difficult with all the heckling.

Minister?

Hon. Margarett R. Best: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, our announcement yesterday was just a recommitment of our government's interest in young people and our efforts to combat smoking. Since the ministry's creation in 2005, we have invested approximately $37 million in programs to prevent children and youth from starting to smoke. We have banned smoking at work and in public places. We have banned smoking in motor vehicles with children under 16 years of age, and we have put up tobacco power walls. We are amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to further protect young people, and our efforts are having an impact. In the last 10 years, the number of students who reported smoking in the past year has decreased from almost—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

POWER PLANT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Acting Premier. The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant in the polluted Clarkson-Oakville airshed, and I agree with them. The mayors of Haldimand, Mississauga and Oakville have

written you a letter expressing their support for an alternative location: the Nanticoke industrial park. The mayors of Oakville and Haldimand are here today to ask you to stop ignoring this alternative solution. Will you listen, Minister?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We are committed to meeting the power needs for the southwest GTA. We understand that along with that goes the responsibility to reduce harmful air pollution. What we are committed to doing is improving the power supply in the region. We know that the demand is growing at more than double the provincial average, so this is an extremely important aspect of the solution for the GTA. We're listening to the community; we know that their concerns have been brought forward. I know that our member for Oakville has been a terrific advocate for his community; he is paying very close attention. We're working with our municipal partners, but we're also mindful of our contractual obligations. We understand that there is a bigger picture here. We need to increase the power for this area, and we'll continue to work with the community.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This is a very rare win-win situation. Oakville doesn't want the gas plant which you are proposing to put in an already-stressed and highly polluted air shed—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Please continue.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This proposed plant is close to homes, it's close to daycare centres and it's close to schools. Haldimand–Norfolk wants the power plant at Nanticoke and has long-term experience and infrastructure to provide Ontario with a reliable energy supply. The Nanticoke industrial park site is consistent with the proposed integrated power supply plan.

Acting Premier, this proposal just makes sense. You have this proposal. When can the mayors of Haldimand, Oakville and Mississauga expect a response from your government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. John Gerretsen: As the member well knows, back in November, the southwest GTA task force was established under the head of Dr. David Balsillie, who will be reporting at the end of June. He also knows that any proponent for a power plant needs to complete all the environmental approval requirements under both the Environmental Assessment Act and the Environmental Protection Act. Our Ministry of the Environment officials will ensure that the proponents' plan will meet or exceed provincial standards and be operated in a totally environmentally responsible way.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to correct the record. Yesterday, during my response, I stated that during the extended period, municipalities will be responsible for enforcing the Liquor Licence Act. In fact it is the AGCO that is responsible for enforcing the act during that time.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is a point of order.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1139 to 1144.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members please take their seats.

On May 31, Ms. Smith moved government notice of motion number 24.

All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Fonseca, Peter	Milloy, John
Albanese, Laura	Gerretsen, John	Mitchell, Carol
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Orazietti, David
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Pendergast, Leeanna
Best, Margarett	Jeffrey, Linda	Phillips, Gerry
Broten, Laurel C.	Johnson, Rick	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Carroll, Aileen	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Murdoch, Bill
Bisson, Gilles	Jones, Sylvia	Prue, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
DiNovo, Cheri	Kormos, Peter	Shurman, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	MacLeod, Lisa	Sterling, Norman W.
Elliott, Christine	Marchese, Rosario	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Paul	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 51; the nays are 26.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion passed.

Motion agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations.

Agreed? I heard a no.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On May 31, Ms. Smith moved government notice of motion 25.

All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Gerretsen, John	Murray, Glen R.
Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Arthurs, Wayne	Hoskins, Eric	Orazietti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoy, Pat	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bartolucci, Rick	Jaczek, Helena	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Best, Margarett	Johnson, Rick	Ramsay, David
Broten, Laurel C.	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Carroll, Aileen	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Chan, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John	
Fonseca, Peter	Mitchell, Carol	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hampton, Howard	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Murdoch, Bill
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Shurman, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLeod, Lisa	Sterling, Norman W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 52; the nays are 26.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. John Yakabuski: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I refer to standing order 56: "Before the adjournment of the House on each Thursday during the session, the government House leader shall announce the business for the following week."

Mr. Norm Miller: "Shall."

Mr. John Yakabuski: I did say "shall."

That is something that has been a practice in this House for many, many decades.

Not only has the government embarked on a method of trying to show increased lack of co-operation here in this House by forcing night sittings when there was a deal in principle in place that would have prevented that and also would have given the opposition party an opposition day motion; when they reneged on that deal in principle, they instituted this policy of not informing the opposition House leaders as to what their plans are.

Case in point: Yesterday, we didn't know what the House business would be until it was called. Not at any time did we know the business of the House until it was called. When you're calling bills, the critics and the people on the opposition side do need time to prepare for debate on those occasions.

I can tell you that in the past—and I had the opportunity to consult with my colleague Norm Sterling, who was the government House leader when we were in government—without exception, they gave the opposition the opportunity on a Thursday to review and see the orders of business for the following week in the House.

It's disappointing, the way that this has ended up near the end of this session, where the government has decided that they will just remove the opposition parties from any input into the business of the House or to be able to participate properly by giving us fair warning.

I refer to Bosc in this instance: "Each Thursday, after oral questions, the Speaker recognizes the House leader of the official opposition, or his or her representative, to ask the government House leader, or his or her representative, about the government orders to be considered by the House in the succeeding days or week. The government House leader then proceeds to outline for the House what business the government intends to bring forward."

That's very clear. I do believe that it is disrespectful of the opposition parties for the government, just because they're upset, just because they don't like the way things turned out with respect to a particular press release that may have rankled the feathers of the government House leader, to then embark upon this program of trying to be difficult in every way possible with respect to the rights of members on the opposition side to be able to conduct their business in a properly informed way.

I think that it is a legitimate point of order, and I think the government House leader and the government are in breach of that order. I ask you to rule on that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills on the same point of order.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I think the whole idea of this particular standing order is that members of the Legislature, including the opposition but also backbench members from the government, have a clear idea of the matters to be debated in here to improve the debate so that people can become knowledgeable of it and so that critics for the particular area will be attending at that time. The practice included, in the past, a statement on Thursday with regard to the business of the upcoming week—to the best of the ability of the government House leader; sometimes things do change over the weekend and during the period of time—to give advance notice, as much as possible, to everyone in the Legislature what the agenda is going to be.

1200

As well, it has become a practice of this government to introduce legislation on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday and then call that legislation prior to the opposition having the opportunity to caucus that legislation the following Tuesday.

I can say that it was my practice, as government House leader, that if legislation was introduced after the caucus meeting that we all have on Tuesdays, we would not call that legislation until after the following Tuesday so that the caucus would have some opportunity to discuss it, formulate an opinion, become knowledgeable about the particular matter and therefore carry on a better debate in this place. I believe that this particular standing order should not only be followed in fact, but it should also be followed in intent and in the spirit of it with regard to future debate in our Parliament as we go forward.

It's late in the session, and I would only hope, Mr. Speaker, that any ruling you might make would have an impact when we meet again in the fall.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to thank the honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills for their comments.

The interpretation of standing order 56, previously standing order 55, appears to have always been permissive, despite the word "shall." It supposes that when the government has determined what the business will be, the House should be informed. The government, in any case, is at liberty to indicate that the business is to be announced.

I refer to a ruling of Speaker Stockwell back in 1997. The Speaker advises that the rule has not been followed to the letter during the last few parliaments. Therefore, he cannot force the government House leader to announce the business every Thursday, nor can the Speaker impose repercussions.

As well, there was a previous ruling of Acting Speaker Arnott in 1996 that the Speaker has no authority to determine the business of the House and that responsibility to determine the business of the House rests with the government House leader.

But I will say, having had the opportunity to sit on both sides of this House, that I can recall many occasions when the government House leader did announce the business for the following week. I can relate particularly, having been a critic for a particular portfolio, where it is extremely beneficial for a critic to have some advance knowledge. If he or she has an understanding of what is going to be debated the following week, it gives that individual an opportunity to be prepared for the debate.

Albeit not ruling in favour of the honourable member, I would deliver a message to the government House leader that serious consideration be given to what is contained in standing order 56 and that she endeavour, as best as possible in her ability, to inform the House of what business will be arising the following week.

The member from Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I just want to indicate that I saw no need to join my friend in the point of order. It was capably put forward with appropriate references from Bosc and to the standing orders.

I do indicate that we are having a House leaders' meeting tomorrow morning. I'm confident that it will be a productive meeting, that it will be a candid exchange, that people will be out of their funk and that we can pave the way for a more productive session commencing September 13, because Lord knows we wouldn't want this air to prevail when we come back in the fall. It would make things very difficult for everybody here.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I think that that's a very appropriate place for the discussion to take place.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1204 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Toby Barrett: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Cheryl Scott, manager of West Niagara community care, as well as Ben Da Sousa, Joanne Keddy and Kornit Chindanon, a student from Bangkok, Thailand, who travelled here today for Hunger Awareness Day.

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to introduce grandmothers raising their grandchildren from Grand-Parenting Again St. Catharines, Brantford and Guelph; and We ROCK Hamilton—ROCK stands for Raising Our Children's Kids—including Sandra Schoenfeldt, Heather Livingstone, Diana Graham, Carol Weaver, Pat Rowen, Beverly McIntosh, Marilyn Oddson, Karen Greene and Diane Chiarelli.

Mr. Greg Sorbara: In conjunction with a statement that I will be making in a few minutes, I would like to welcome to the assembly from Vaughan the Ahmadiyya Muslim community national president, Lal Khan Malik. He is joined by Farhan Khokhar, the national secretary for outreach; Saleem Akhtar, the chair of the national public relations committee; and Hafeez Khalifa, the director for national public relations. I'd like to welcome them all.

Mr. Charles Sousa: It gives me great pleasure to introduce to this House my daughter Cristine Sousa, a University of Ottawa student, a wonderful girl and here visiting us today. Thank you, Cristine.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CARLETON LODGE AND MANORDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is a real pleasure to be able to stand here today to celebrate two very cherished institutions in the former city of Nepean, which is now the southwest end of the city of Ottawa. This year, both Manordale Public School and Carleton Lodge are turning

50 years old. Both were created in 1960 to serve the current city of Ottawa's southwest end.

Carleton Lodge was the first municipal long-term-care home in Ottawa–Carleton. In 1989, a new facility was reconstructed right on the beautiful banks of the Rideau River. Thank you to Mary Zion, Ghuylaine Theriault, Janet Moris, Luc Carriere and Brenda Atwood for doing the wonderful work that they do on behalf of Nepean–Carleton seniors.

Also, Manordale Public School celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, and I am able to work with the principal, Suzie Robertson, and school administrator, Bev Charles. They also have wonderful volunteers, whom I'm so very proud of, who will be honoured next week: Myrna Hay, who has been volunteering at the school for 43 years, answering the phones, working for the people and making sure our students and their parents are looked after; as well, Murray McClymont, who Bev Charles calls Murray the saint, or St. Murray. He has been there for 22 years.

Nepean–Carleton is a fast-growing place. It's really a new and vibrant community, but we have 50 years of a great legacy in our institutions like Carleton Lodge and Manordale Public School. I really appreciate the opportunity to speak so highly about them on the floor of this Legislature.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Paul Miller: There are countless grandparents across this province who are the primary caregivers for their at-risk grandchildren. The temporary care assistance program previously provided these families with at least minimal support. Unfortunately, new directives imposed by this government have left many of Ontario's grandparents to fend for themselves. This hurts not only the grandparents but the grandchildren they care for. It's time for the government to revisit this issue and support all Ontario families.

As I mentioned during the introduction of guests a few moments ago, I'm joined here today by fantastic grandparents from many organizations. We ROCK, Cangrands, Grand-Parenting Again and Legal Aid Ontario all fight, day in and day out, for grandparents in this province. Today they are here to show their support for my private member's bill. These individuals and the organizations they are affiliated with are very much the inspiration behind this piece of legislation, and I am proud to have the opportunity to work with them.

These grandparent groups have organized rallies here at Queen's Park, bus trips across the province and countless other initiatives to gain support when the government has ignored them.

Their dedication to this issue is unmatched, and for this I say thank you and keep up the good work.

TOWN OF CHAPLEAU

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I would like to take this opportunity to update the House on the emergency situation that took place in Chapleau.

Last Thursday, a forest fire started near Highway 101, approximately 40 kilometres east of Hawk Junction. The Ministry of Natural Resources set up a base camp at the Weyerhaeuser mill location. MNR's priority was to suppress the fire and enable the repair of Hydro One's transmission lines through the area.

Helicopters and air tanker support, nine initial attack crews and four Type II crews were all committed to the fire effort. Heavy equipment was used to consolidate the perimeter guards. The fire's most immediate impact was to cut off the electricity supply to the fine town of Chapleau, the area First Nations and all hamlets.

I am pleased to report that power was restored late yesterday afternoon. I would like to express my gratitude and our gratitude to the Ministry of Natural Resources for their exquisite fire response and to Hydro One for its impressive work under very difficult conditions in restoring power through an area that had just been burned over during a forest fire.

I'd like to thank Earle Freeborn, the mayor, for his leadership throughout this emergency situation and for keeping me up to date on what was going on, his council, his staff and all those volunteers in Chapleau who helped to manage this very difficult situation. I'd also like to acknowledge the local radio station, JJAM FM, for keeping the community informed.

Best wishes for a return to normalcy in Chapleau.

DEAFBLIND SERVICES

Mrs. Julia Munro: I recently had the pleasure of meeting with representatives of Deafblind Ontario Services in my riding. They help about 7,000 Ontario residents a year, people who will need lifelong specialized support.

The biggest issue the organization faces is training intervenors and retaining them. Since each individual with deafblindness has his own unique way of communicating, it can take months or even years to establish a bond with an intervenor. This one-on-one relationship establishes the trust and communication flow needed to help the individual who is deafblind gain more independence.

High-quality specialized training for this profession is imperative to the success of individuals with deafblindness. Funding for training and competitive wages is instrumental in recruiting and retaining qualified, committed staff. Yet this government placed a wage freeze on the salaries of staff, and it has now extended the wage freeze for two years in order to save $22 million. This wage freeze will mean a cut in services to front-line health care for deafblind people in Ontario.

It is time for this government to stop these cuts and provide deafblind citizens of this—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

VILLAGE OF PORT CREDIT

Mr. Charles Sousa: I rise today to recognize a milestone year for the village of Port Credit in south

Mississauga. Founded in 1835, the village will mark its 175th anniversary as a vibrant lakefront community. Over these many years, Port Credit has transformed from a trade centre and fishing port to a beautiful waterfront village of vibrant businesses, teeming with tourism.

Whether enjoying an award-winning Old Credit Brew in the many cafés and restaurants, shopping along Lakeshore, chartering a fishing boat in the salmon capital of Ontario or just walking along the pristine lakeside, Port Credit offers something for everyone.

Enjoying its many festivals, Port Credit is rich with activity to celebrate this historic anniversary. To name a few, there has been a pond hockey tournament, public displays of the village's storied past and a collection of items for a time capsule honouring Port Credit's history.

1510

On July 1, Port Credit's Paint the Town Red Canada Day event will celebrate the 175th anniversary. It will surely be a spectacular party to remember. On July 1, we will celebrate Canada Day and promote a fun-filled family day, which kicks off with a sunrise ceremony featuring live local music, a parade, a giant birthday cake and a fireworks display at Memorial Park.

All of this is possible thanks to the tremendous work of hundreds of volunteers and the dedication of visionaries on the anniversary committee. The spirit of community from Port Credit residents is inspirational. Congratulations and thank you to all who work to organize this special anniversary.

I invite you to join us on July 1 to celebrate the birth of our country and the 175th anniversary of Port Credit.

RIDING OF BRUCE–GREY–OWEN SOUND

Mr. Bill Murdoch: With the summer break at our doorstep, I know that every one of us in the chamber today is looking for an early exit. It's just too bad we have to do these dumb night sittings. Nevertheless, by the end of this week, most of you will have agreed with me and returned home to do the real work, which is constituency work.

This summer will be a busy one in my riding. From barbecue parties to fish fries to music festivals, anniversaries and sports events, there will be an assortment of activities to enjoy. So I take this opportunity to invite all of you to visit Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and take part in some of our great events, such as the 23rd Annual Salmon Spectacular, from August 27 to September 5, along with the Team Murdoch fish fry on September 4; the 35th Annual Summerfolk festival, August 20 to 22 in Owen Sound; the annual pork chop barbecue in my hometown of Bognor on July 21; Tobermory's Chi-Cheemaun Festival, starting June 18; and the Sauble Sandfest on August 5.

We'll also be celebrating the 40th anniversary of ECL, Electrical Contacts Ltd., in Hanover thus summer.

I'd like to wish all of you a happy and safe summer. I know I'll be happy to be spending a lot more time with the folks back home. After all, I've always called for a different breed of MPPs at Queen's Park, ones who focus more on their community needs and less on the gamesmanship that's played out on the floor of this Legislature.

I hope you keep my thoughts in mind when you return to Queen's Park in the fall. See you in September.

AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Mr. Greg Sorbara: I rise in the House today to speak to the terrible acts of violence that took place last week in Lahore, Pakistan. I refer to the savage attacks on the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in two of its mosques at the height of religious services last Friday. Nearly 100 people from the community were killed, and many more were seriously injured. The pain of these attacks has been felt around the world, including in Ontario.

This kind of terror, brutality and religious persecution is simply unthinkable. Yet it represents just part of the ongoing persecution of the Ahmadiyya community and Ahmadi Muslims around the world. That persecution is rooted in hatred, discrimination and violence against a truly peace-loving religious faith.

Vaughan is home to the national headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Canada, and thousands of Vaughan residents are members of that community. They and all Canadians should know that we condemn these acts in the strongest possible terms, and we call upon the government of Pakistan to take every possible step to end the persecution of the Ahmadiyya community, including reform of its blasphemy laws.

At the same time, we express our grief and sorrow to those whose families, friends and fellow Ahmadis have suffered so tragically.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: I'm asking the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and this government to allow multiple sclerosis sufferers to obtain treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, here in Ontario. The treatment consists of corrective angioplasty, a well-known, universally practised procedure that is of very low risk and relatively low expense.

I'm not, at this time, requesting that the treatment be covered by OHIP, but only that MS patients have the right to decide for themselves to access this procedure here in Ontario, just as patients can have cosmetic surgery by highly skilled doctors in accredited medical facilities.

I have spoken frequently with Dr. Sandy McDonald, a thoracic surgeon in Barrie, who has studied with Dr. Zamboni in Italy and who has performed a number of venoplasties, as the angioplasty is called, in Barrie. He is committed to making this procedure available to MS patients.

More research and double-blind clinical trials are indeed needed to determine the correlation between

CCSVI and MS, but Dr. McDonald and others have found the anecdotal evidence of relief is very compelling.

Yes, more study is needed, but we can't wait while we study. MS patients must be allowed to obtain the venoplasties that so impact their quality of life and of their families and their caregivers.

RIDING OF GLENGARRY–PRESCOTT–RUSSELL

CIRCONSCRIPTION DE GLENGARRY–PRESCOTT–RUSSELL

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I'm delighted to share with this House that tomorrow marks the third annual Glengarry–Prescott–Russell day here at Queen's Park. GPR day is a time for us to celebrate all of the wonderful products that come from Ontario's most eastern communities.

Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is a very special place, home to thousands of friendly and hard-working people. This area has seen a lot of positive changes since the election of the McGuinty government.

Demain, j'invite tous les membres de cette Assemblée et leur personnel à venir célébrer nos producteurs locaux de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

I am looking forward to introducing you to the nine mayors from our eastern Ontario municipalities. The wine and cheese will take place in room 247 from 11:30 to 1 p.m. I invite everyone to come and taste the best Canadian poutine along with our famous local cheese and our award-winning Beau's beer. Once again, I invite everyone to come and celebrate with the GPR producers in room 247.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. David Orazietti: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau postsecondaire, la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel et la Loi de 2002 sur l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I beg leave to present a report on school boards, acquisition of goods and services, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move its adoption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling presents the committee report and moves its adoption. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Yes. This report is in response to the Auditor General's 2008 annual report, section 411. That means that this was a follow-up audit to the original audit, which took place in 2007. This related to one of the first matters that the Auditor General dealt with in his expanded jurisdiction to look at school boards and their particular management practices.

As a result of this being the first report, we thought it was important for the public accounts committee to call back in those school boards that had been before us and measure the results of what the Auditor General had been able to achieve by looking at the acquisition policies of the various school boards across Ontario.

The committee made no recommendations on this report, other than to note that the process had been successful. The committee decided, as a result, to create another report, which I'm going to introduce shortly, to outline the best practices and the success of the committee process and the Auditor General's report of 2007 and 2008.

With that, I would move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I beg leave to present a report on the public accounts committee best practice 2009 from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move its adoption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling presents the committee's report and moves its adoption. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

1520

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: As I indicated on the previously submitted report, this is perhaps the first time in the Legislature of Ontario's history that a committee has submitted a report on trying to establish best practices for the committee, and evolving that committee's role as we go forward. This report will become a record and will no doubt be recommended to future public accounts committees as to what they can achieve by adopting certain kinds of practices as they go forward.

As I mentioned before, the committee in 2008 interviewed a number of school boards and the Ministry of Education with regard to acquisition practices by school boards across Ontario. Part of the auditor's report related to the fact that although the Ministry of Education had asked various school boards to adopt acquisition principles and procurement policies, the response to the ministry had been very poor. The committee then undertook to not only recommend to the Minister of Education that their own policies be followed, but they wanted to encourage the school boards from across Ontario to actually put into practice what the Ministry of Education had asked them to do. The committee made a decision to not only make recommendations to the ministry, but asked the Chair, myself, to contact each board, the director of each board, and the chair of each board of education across Ontario, and request that they not only respond to the ministry with regard to procurement policies, but that they publish on a website their procurement policies. It was found that because there was a direct interaction between the committee of this Legislature and the school boards, we were able to help the Ministry of Education get their policy into effect and have all of those school boards across Ontario, bar none, adopt a procurement and acquisition policy and make it public.

At my request and with the full support of all members of the committee, I asked that we consider not only introducing the report with regard to the specific matter, but make a report to the Legislature on the best practices. Some of the best practices that are dealt with in this report—and it's a very short report, three pages—include recommendations which deal with direct engagement between transfer partners and the committee of the Legislature so that transfer partners understand that a committee of the Legislature is interested in how they are spending our taxpayers' money, even though there is an intermediary, of course, the ministry, which is handing them that money.

I'm proud of the work that all members of the committee have done in this matter. I think that all committees should perhaps follow the example that the public accounts committee has put forward. If they find an innovative way of assisting the administration of our government—our governments, as we go forward—in implementing the policies and making certain that people are following those policies, then we as politicians, as committee members, should try to institute those practices and make certain that the people who are the benefactors of our taxpayers' dollars know that politicians are indeed looking over their shoulders and want them spent prudently and wisely. That's what we have achieved at the public accounts committee. Now it has become part of the record and I urge other committees and future public accounts committees to do the same.

I adjourn the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO WORKS AMENDMENT ACT (CARE ASSISTANCE), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE PROGRAMME ONTARIO AU TRAVAIL (AIDE POUR SOINS)

Mr. Paul Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 87, An Act to amend the Ontario Works Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 87, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur le programme Ontario au travail.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Paul Miller: Section 10 of the Ontario Works Act currently provides for income assistance and benefits to an adult who cares for a child on a temporary basis, provided that the adult does not have a legal obligation to support the child. This bill amends section 10 of the act to apply where the child is in an adult's care for a temporary or indefinite period of time.

In addition, subsections are added to provide the following:

(1) An adult has a legal obligation to support a child if he or she has an obligation to support the child under the Family Law Act or the Divorce Act or under similar legislation in another jurisdiction.

(2) For the purposes of this section, a legal obligation to support a child does not arise because an adult other than a step-parent has demonstrated a settled intention to treat the child as a child of his or her family.

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF OMBUDSMAN

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to deal with a government motion without notice or amendment dealing with the reappointment of the Ombudsman for the province of Ontario, and that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak to the motion.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"To the Lieutenant Governor in Council:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the reappointment of André Marin as the Ombudsman for the province of Ontario as provided

in section 4 of the Ombudsman Act, RSO 1990, chapter O.6, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act," and

That the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith moves that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"To the Lieutenant Governor in Council:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the reappointment of André Marin as the Ombudsman for the province of Ontario as provided in section 4 of the Ombudsman Act, RSO 1990, chapter O.6, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act," and

That the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

Debate?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the reappointment of Mr. Marin today.

We are very pleased that the selection panel has reached a unanimous decision. I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and those who have served on the selection panel and who have come to this decision.

As members of this Legislature know, the Ombudsman of Ontario is an officer of the Legislature, independent of government and political parties. The Ombudsman's job is to ensure government accountability through effective oversight of the administration of government services. Mr. Marin has provided good advice to the government over the last five years.

Mr. Speaker, you would know, and many in this Legislature would know, that he started work as a crown attorney in Ottawa, until 1996. In 1996, he was named director of Ontario's special investigation unit, SIU, the civilian agency in Canada for investigating incidents in which police officers have caused serious injury or death.

In 1998, Mr. Marin was named Canada's first military Ombudsman, and he remained in that job until 2005, when he became Ontario's sixth Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman plays a very important role in the province of Ontario. The job is not one designed to make friends within the government, but it is an important role. His job is to highlight the imperfections and help us, as a government, learn from his advice and from the imperfections that he identifies and take advantage of the advice that he provides.

Our government has made a lot of progress in boosting health care, improving our schools and attracting new jobs and investments in the province. But nobody is perfect and we need independent advocates to shine some light on what can be improved even more in the province. For that, we are grateful to Mr. Marin for the job that he has done over the last five years, and we look forward to continuing to work with him over the next five years.

1530

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to finally get to this point. The reappointment of André Marin as our Ombudsman is something that we in the PC caucus and the official opposition have been looking forward to for some time. This process began several months ago. It's a conclusion but it was a long battle getting there. I want to congratulate Mr. Marin for keeping his head high and maintaining his dignity throughout this process.

As the government House leader has said, Mr. Marin has had a distinguished career as a crown attorney, then as the director of the special investigations unit and as Canada's first military Ombudsman. In every role that he has served he has received many deserved accolades for the work which he has done.

His work as Ombudsman over the past five years resulted in no less than 21 major investigations and reports, and the government pledged to adopt each and every one of the recommendations out of those reports.

I can tell you from a personal recollection that when we had an issue with the way military families were being treated at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa and the issue was turned over to the Ombudsman, it was not long before a resolution was found. The government was found wanting and agreed to correct its oversight. So we thanked the Ombudsman at that time and we thank him again.

We thank him for the tremendous work he has done over the past five years and look forward to him continuing to be over the next five years the fantastic watchdog that he has been.

I would be remiss if I didn't speak a little bit about the process and the way that, much to the chagrin of, I think, many members of the government side of this House—certainly all members of the opposition side of this House—this process was politicized like none ever before it and, we hope, none in the future.

An independent officer of the Legislative Assembly was treated in such a way that none should ever be treated. Yes, we did have a process by which a panel would be selected and a member from each party would have input into making a decision and interviewing candidates, including Mr. Marin, who would be reapplying for his job.

When the government didn't get its way, it resorted to a smear campaign—a smear campaign that involved, as the media like to say, government sources. It's hard for me to believe that the hands of Warren Kinsella were not on this one as well, who quits his job in Ottawa on March 10, and on March the 14 the slagging and the slander of André Marin starts, coming out of Liberal sources. It's just the way that Warren Kinsella conducts himself, and I'm not surprised that his hands would be all over this again.

What then went on in the shameful media fiasco put this man through the wringer, but also put a lot of other good people through the wringer. There was collateral damage involved here, too, and I apologize and regret that people like Susan Whelan, who were good candidates—not good enough but good candidates—had to be dragged through it because the government decided they were going to make this a public issue. That was regrettable as well.

It's a shameful example of what can happen when partisan politics becomes the order of the day for the government as opposed to looking for the best candidate for the job through a very reasonable process and then appointing that candidate, as should have been done. Much of this could have been avoided had the government acted honourably from the start. That I regret, and we hope that we've learned by example through this charade that when you've got the best candidate already in-house, just because they've been tough on you, don't try and besmirch their reputation.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm pleased and honoured to speak to this motion today on behalf of the NDP caucus. You'll see that I'm joined by caucus mates as well as NDP leader Andrea Horwath. We support this motion wholeheartedly.

I'm pleased as well that this House is going to be unanimous in its support for an officer of the assembly. It's been a number of years now since I've been honoured to be House leader, and during that course of time I've worked hard, along with my NDP colleagues and other members of the Legislature, to develop a hiring process, a selection process that's far removed from the historic one where the government simply sought out its appointee and then used its majority force to have that appointee named to that particular position. Over the course of the last many years now, I think we've become increasingly successful at selecting by unanimity, by consensus. And it's so incredibly important, because these are officers of the assembly that we're appointing. These are people who have to be non-partisan, and who have been. These are people who have to understand that their commitment as an officer of the assembly is to the assembly in its totality, like you, Speaker, like the Clerk, like the Integrity Commissioner, like the Auditor General, like others.

New Democrats are confident that this assembly is selecting the best-qualified person today for this position, make no mistake about it. We recognize Mr. Marin's outstanding intellect, his personal courage, his tenacity, his effectiveness and his ability to communicate effectively, not just with us here in the chamber and, more importantly, with the government and, even more importantly than the government, with the bureaucracy that he's charged with investigating and dealing with, but he's also extremely effective with communicating with the people of Ontario.

I've been a fan of Ontario's Ombudsman since the day of Arthur Maloney. I'm old enough to remember him. I was but a student as I watched him work as an outstanding lawyer. I've watched the Ombudsman through the course of the history of the Ontario Ombudsman's office, and I've learned a great deal from each and every one of them. I've been a fan of every one of them in a very special and unique way. I tell you that I personally am a fan of Mr. Marin. I'm confident that he will serve us, that he will serve the people of Ontario well. He's reenergized that office. He's made the Office of the Ombudsman water cooler talk—not here at Queen's Park but in communities across the province. Folks come into our constituency office and they don't talk about necessarily referring something to the Ombudsman's office, they talk about referring something to "that André Marin guy." And I say that's a good thing, because he's put a face, he's put a style, he's put a personality on this most important office.

But I also want to say this: New Democrats condemn in the strongest possible terms the seamy, seedy campaign of scurrilous slanders that Mr. Marin was subjected to during the course of the last few months. And I tell you that I am confident that those slanders have no substance in reality or fact. We were disappointed to see them displayed, mere allegations, unchecked, untested, on the front pages of major newspapers, where their only purpose was to fester like bacteria in a petri dish. Our conduct today as an assembly, by appointing Mr. Marin, by passing this motion unanimously, is to put those slanders, to put those allegations, to put those vile rumours to rest once and for all.

I want to thank Nancy Marling, human resources director of the Legislative Assembly, and the Clerk, Deb Deller. I want to thank you, Speaker, for your patient assistance to this small tripartite committee. I want to thank Sylvia Jones from the Conservative caucus for her intelligent, thoughtful role on that committee. I also want to thank David Zimmer, because as a new member of that committee after that committee had reached an impasse, he brought competent, careful, rational insight to the committee. David Zimmer has to be credited with assisting that committee in achieving its unanimity.

1540

We also have to commit ourselves to ensuring that this position and this selection process can never be politicized. That's why the New Democrats have Bill 4; there has to be a 10-year term and no reappointment possible. That's the only way that there's going to be a complete and thorough depoliticization of the appointment process, and that should apply to all officers of the assembly.

I congratulate Mr. Marin, and I look forward to seeing his work over the course of the next half a decade. I thank you for your patience, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All members have heard the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Marin is seated in the Speaker's gallery. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, André, on your reappointment. I know that your family is going to be extremely proud of you. We look forward to the good work that you're going to continue to do for us within the Ontario Legislature.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to welcome Barb Finlay, the deputy Ombudsman, who has joined Mr. Ombudsman today in the gallery.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 12 a.m. midnight on Tuesday, June 1, 2010.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1541 to 1546.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Orazietti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Johnson, Rick	Pupatello, Sandra
Bentley, Christopher	Kular, Kuldip	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramal, Khalil
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Crozier, Bruce	Mangat, Amrit	Sergio, Mario
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Smith, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David
Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza	
Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Bailey, Robert	Miller, Norm	Shurman, Peter
Barrett, Toby	Miller, Paul	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia	
Hillier, Randy	Murdoch, Bill	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 34; the nays are 13.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

VETERANS

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas with turmoil and fighting around the globe, what better time to remember the price our veterans paid for freedom than the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II; and

"Whereas we also remember and honour our present-day veterans and all who have paid the ultimate price fighting for the freedoms we enjoy in this great nation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government declare November 11 a provincial holiday to honour our veterans of past and present; as well as all the soldiers of today who currently fight to defend our freedoms."

1550

That was gathered by Wilma McNeil, and I agree with it and affix my signature.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Paul Miller: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas workplace injuries should not result in the poverty of an injured worker, and that it is the duty of a workers' compensation system to ensure the financial security of those who can no longer engage in the labour market, and that financial burdens accumulated by the workers' compensation system should not be the burden of the injured worker;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: That all those who engage in work in Ontario shall be covered under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act; That the Legislature shall eliminate deeming permanently disabled workers to be earning income when they are not; That annual cost-of-living adjustments be made a permanent addition to the legislation; That claims-based experience rating be eliminated; and that the unfunded liability not be reduced at the expense of the injured worker."

I agree with this petition and will affix my name to it, and Katina will bring it down.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by many of the constituents in my riding.

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

I've signed my signature in support.

ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Jim Wilson: This is a petition that comes from the good people of Elmvale.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

"Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational requirements and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found $12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area."

I agree with the petition and I will sign it.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^me^ France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under" certain "conditions ... ; and

"Whereas" since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to "make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and send it to the clerks' table with page Sarah.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly that I'd like to read, and it goes as follows:

"Whereas Ontarians pay significantly more money than comparable US states for precisely the same generic drugs purchased at pharmacies for diabetes, cancer treatment, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart conditions and many other types of treatment; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers spend more than half a billion dollars each and every year on so-called professional allowances ... money paid by generic drug manufacturers to big pharmacy chains to stock their product. This money does not assist patients, and instead pays for shareholder dividends, salaries, benefits, bonuses and overhead expenses; and

"Whereas drug costs are among the fastest-growing parts of Ontario's health care system. Taxpayers' funds should better be invested in improving access to new drugs to consumers and seniors and lowering prices on existing products; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has proposed a more equitable means of compensating community pharmacists for serving clients and will eliminate abuse by big pharmacy chains of rebates provided by manufacturers of drug products;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario and all members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly support Ontario's proposed changes to the regulations governing ... patients and Ontario seniors with lower drug prices and better access to more new drugs for all Ontarians."

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition, and to send it down with page Vrajesh Dave of the community of Lisgar in western Mississauga.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly which I'm reading in for my good friend from Cambridge, who wasn't able to be here to read it in.

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services has the responsibility to ensure the provision of core mental health services to the children and youth of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services provides funding to certain community agencies across Ontario for the provision of these services; and

"Whereas funding for core children's mental health services has increased by only 8% since 1992, despite inflationary pressures of over 30%; and

"Whereas the community agencies mandated to provide these core children's mental health services have rationalized and consolidated the delivery of such services in order to deliver them within the financial constraints, resulting in long waiting lists and reduced

services to the detriment of their clients and the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Mental Health Commission of Canada identified that 70% of mental illnesses have their onset during childhood and adolescence and that early intervention and treatment provide significant potential for reducing the financial and emotional burden on society;

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to immediately increase funding for core children's mental health services by a minimum of 5% and to commit to similar annual increases until funding is returned to a level equivalent to that of 1992."

I have signed it and will send it down with Dylan.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

Mme France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury.

"Whereas a company's resumption of production with replacement workers during a legal strike puts undue tensions and divisions on a community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes;

"Therefore I, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers during a strike."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with page Katina.

CHANGEMENT DE CLIMAT

M. Phil McNeely: J'ai une pétition à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. Elle est signée par à peu près 220 étudiants de l'école Gisèle-Lalonde, et les trois premiers sont Vincent Quiron, Flavie Leclair et Joshua Kramer.

« Attendu que dans son rapport de 2007, le Groupe d'experts intergouvernemental sur l'évolution du climat des Nations Unies a conclu que, sans des réductions dramatiques au niveau des émissions de dioxyde de carbone imputables à des activités humaines, les changements climatiques pourraient avoir des "effets soudains et irréversibles sur les océans, les glaciers, les terres, les littoraux et les espèces"; et

« Attendu qu'aucun groupe, pays ou continent n'assume la responsabilité des changements climatiques mais que tous les êtres humains sont collectivement responsables d'y apporter une solution; et

« Attendu que la production de gaz à effet de serre a augmenté de 27 % au-dessus des niveaux de 1990 au Canada; et

« Attendu que nos chefs élus ont la responsabilité de rendre compte aux membres du public de leurs gestes pour enrayer la problématique des changements climatiques par égard pour la redevabilité; et

« Attendu que les jeunes en particulier, héritiers éventuels de cette Terre, notre seul demeure, démontrent un intérêt spécial pour cette question;

« Nous, les soussignés, adressons une pétition à l'Assemblée législative pour demander que l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario adopte rapidement ... la Loi sur la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques. »

Je vais y signer mon nom et je vais l'envoyer avec M. Luke.

1600

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care in our ... pharmacy now."

It's signed by hundreds of my constituents in Wellington–Halton Hills.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the health and general well-being of all citizens of Ontario is in the public interest as a necessary good;

"Whereas municipalities across Ontario have expressed economic and environmental concerns about wind farms being forced upon them by the 'Green Energy Act'; and

"Whereas multiple wind farm sites are being considered by the government of Ontario, in the absence of independent, science-based studies on the long-term effects on the health of the residents and wildlife of Sarnia–Lambton in close proximity to wind turbines;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for a moratorium on all wind farm projects until an independent, comprehensive study of the possible health and environmental impacts of wind farms is completed and Premier McGuinty restores the planning authority governing them to municipalities and local boards."

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and send it down with Tristen.

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition is about identity theft, and was given to me by the Consumer Federation of Canada. It's to the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services. It reads as follows:

"Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

"Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

"Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

"Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 75, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature ... be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

"(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information such as SIN and loan account numbers.

"(2) Should a consumer reporting agency discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the affected consumer.

"(3) The consumer reporting agency shall only report credit inquiry records resulting from actual applications for credit or increase of credit, except in a report given to the consumer.

"(4) The consumer reporting agency shall investigate disputed information within 30 days and correct, supplement or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed, incomplete or inaccurate."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm delighted to sign it.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition today, and it's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 80";

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year...;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

I agree with this petition, I'll affix and send it down with Stig.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. John Milloy: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art and Design Act, 2002, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, 60 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Milloy has moved motion number 27.

Mr. Milloy.

Hon. John Milloy: The bill before us, Bill 43, deals with three very important pieces of legislation.

As members are pointing out, this is a motion on time allocation, and I just want to take a second to talk about some of the urgency surrounding this bill.

I think members are very aware of the recent speech from the throne of this government, which outlined the Open Ontario plan of this government, which very much sees the international context as holding great opportunities for Ontario's future. One of those areas involves international students and, dare I call it, the whole Ontario brand of excellence when it comes to education. I have to tell you, having had the opportunity to attend conferences both here in Canada and outside of our borders, Ontario has a stellar reputation when it comes to education at the post-secondary level, with our colleges and universities and also with our private career colleges.

What this bill does is it strengthens this brand by affording protection to students and to institutions themselves in three key areas.

The first has to deal with private institutions under the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, which is the body that looks at applications that come forward from private institutions looking for degree-granting status. It strengthens that to make sure that only the highest-quality education comes forward.

The second deals with private career colleges. Private career colleges perform a very valuable function here in the province of Ontario in terms of educating students. Are there bad actors in the system? Yes, there are, and we've actually worked very hard over the last number of years to strengthen the legislative framework and to strengthen the enforcement that goes along with it to ensure that these colleges—any bad actors—are weeded out and that people get the best education they can through private career colleges. The changes that are proposed in this bill, which I am urging members that we push forward to third reading, would in fact strengthen that.

Finally, OCAD, the Ontario College of Art and Design, again, part of the excellence of our higher educational system here in the province of Ontario: It's one of the leading art and design institutions in Canada, and at their request, we are looking at changing their name, allowing them to change their brand and put in the word "university," which would allow them to attract more students and to strengthen their role.

So, three very important pieces of legislation are being addressed by this bill. It has been the topic of debate in this Legislature, it has been examined by committees, and I think it's time that we move forward with this motion so that it can go on to third reading and, if passed, strengthen the Ontario brand and strengthen the Ontario post-secondary education system.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Jim Wilson: This bill, Bill 43, was rushed from the beginning, and I think it stems from an interview that Minister Milloy had with the CBC when, after some bad publicity from the government side regarding some unregistered career colleges and one community college, the government was quite hasty in bringing forward this legislation, which they claim will crack down on the bad apples. Now, I think there are something like 435 private career colleges in the province of Ontario, but those are the registered colleges.

I guess why I and my colleagues in the PC caucus do not support this legislation, at least the first two parts of the legislation—I'll talk about the Ontario College of Art and Design a little later. We do support allowing them to become a university, to put together a university governance structure and to change their name, and we made that clear during clause-by-clause hearings which were held yesterday.

1610

The bill came in a month ago, on April 27. It had barely even been printed when it was brought in for second reading. We had a very short time for second reading, just a few short hours, and then off it went to committee. We had one afternoon set aside for clause-by-clause, and that was yesterday. About three weeks prior to that, we had one afternoon set aside for committee hearings. Unfortunately, it was the same day that private career colleges across Canada—their Canadian association was hosting a seminar meeting in western Canada that was set to take place over a number of days. So only about 11 groups made it in to talk to the committee out of the over 400 private career colleges that are affected by this legislation, because they were all busy. We did hear from a couple of the major umbrella associations, but other than that, only a couple of what I call the mom-and-pop shops—and I'll read some of their submissions here today—were in Ontario and were able to come to the hearings.

The only notice that was given was on the Internet. At least when I was in government for my first 15 years or so, we always gave notice in the major newspapers and we had extensive public hearings. The new members don't seem to know and the new minister doesn't seem to know—new in terms of the last couple of elections—that we used to have extensive public hearings. We would never think of the only notice being over the Internet—because we didn't have the Internet. So we didn't think of the only notice being you have to know by some miracle that the bill is being introduced and then you have to know by some miracle to go to the Ontario Legislative Assembly website to find out when the hearings are and when the written submissions are to be in to the committee. That occurred over a weekend. It occurred over a Friday, Saturday and Sunday; and bang, on Monday all these hundreds of organizations were to get their act together on legislation that came as a complete surprise.

Those that were able to give us written submissions before the deadline and that handful that were able to come to the committee were unanimous in telling us that they found this bill a complete surprise and that they thought they had a very good working relationship—again, those registered private career colleges which are required to have all of their programs registered with the government, their curriculum approved by the government, and many of them take students that are funded by the government through Second Career and other programs.

The fact of the matter is they told us to a T that they were completely surprised. The main association of the private career colleges of Ontario got a phone call saying that a bill was being introduced by Mr. Milloy the following day and that it was minor in nature. Apparently, the person from the minister's office asked if they'd like a briefing, and then by the end of the phone call, told the representative for the private career colleges, "No, it's so minor that you really don't need a briefing." Well, it turns out it's not minor at all. There are tremendous new powers given to the ministry, and I'll go over some of those in a little bit.

Again, the new powers, though, don't catch the bad apples. If I had my briefing notes here from when I spoke briefly on second reading on it—I think they're coming—I could give you some of the examples of the bad apples the government is trying to go after. But, again, they're unregistered colleges, so they don't fall within the purview of this bill or the government. What the government should have been bringing in is legislation to deal with fraud. There's one—and again, if I can get my notes, because I hope my staff is watching.

That's another thing: This is a time allocation motion. We don't know until moments before which critic is to be on duty this afternoon, what bill is coming up, because the normal courtesy of telling us a week before or a day before, at least, from the government House leader, the member from North Bay, isn't there anymore. They've totally given that up. It used to have to be on Thursdays before, the week before, at the end of the legislative week; at the end of the legislative day on Thursday, they would always tell us what was coming up the week before. So you don't know, and we didn't know and we

haven't known for weeks what's coming up until sometimes five minutes before, sometimes just when she stands on her feet. That's a really discourteous way to run a Parliament.

Interjection.

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's contempt, as my honourable colleague from Lanark says, and I believe it is. But that's certainly within the purview of this debate, because it is time allocation.

Going back to the lack of notification to the private career colleges: That's a really discourteous way of doing business, too—it's not a way of doing business. It's estimated—they're not too sure exactly how many students at any given time are in the over 400 private career colleges, but it's about 26,000 students at any given time. Those are students paying their own way. Many of them are studying trades. Many of them are studying niche markets that aren't covered by our community colleges, and therefore there is a real need for these private career colleges.

The ones that the government needs to go after—I thought you would be bringing in a discussion paper on how to work with the federal government to expand the Criminal Code to bring in stronger fraud charges or laws against people who are fraudulently out there pretending to be a career college, not registered. It's not the minister's fault, really, but they're not registered with the government. In most cases, the government isn't aware of them until somebody complains, until students complain that they've been ripped off.

Unfortunately, some of these colleges, the fraudulent ones, are in existence for two, three, four years, sometimes longer. The students go there for two, three or four years; they pay thousands of dollars a year—some of these tuitions are $12,000, $15,000, $30,000 a year—and then they graduate and they find out they can't get into the trade or into the apprenticeship that they think they're learning—welding, for example—because the standards at that particular unregistered career college were horrible; they didn't prepare them for the workforce and are not recognized by journeymen or by future employers. This bill doesn't deal with that. This bill only deals with if you're registered and you're essentially within the government system, then it gives the superintendent at the ministry more authority to crack down on you if you're bad. But most of them aren't bad.

One of the lawyers from the ministry that did brief me on the bill a month ago said, "About 5% of our customers create 80% of our business," so it's a small number. I think 5% was exaggerated, too, because in that 5% of complaints that keep the lawyers at the ministry busy, most of them are unregistered colleges; most of them will never come under Bill 43; most of them are under the Criminal Code creating fraud, as far as I can tell, and the government's not doing anything to—there was an interview. I saw the interview that the minister had, and they said, "What can you do to further crack down on these colleges?" And the minister said, "Well, we could increase the fines." That's fine if you're a registered college, but if you're out there, I don't see how this bill helps very much at all.

Because of the short timelines, there were many, many written submissions or emails that simply did not make it into the public record; they were not considered prior to this stage of the bill. Maxine Schacker is the director of Max the Mutt Animation School on Queen Street West in Toronto. Maxine writes:

"About Bill 43:

"This legislation is not in the interest of students, schools or the province.

"Checks and balances are always necessary. Any legislation that gives total power to an agency, and allows policy decisions without review, that does not include built-in protections and recourse to an impartial hearing, holds the potential for misuse of power (intentional or accidental) and has no place in a free society.

"This bill potentially gives the superintendent complete, unhindered and overreaching powers of program approval/revocation. This bill could decimate an entire 'type' or 'class' of programs. How can anyone invest in a school knowing that without cause, permission to teach a certain subject could suddenly be revoked … with no cause and no recourse to a hearing?

1620

"A school could be served with a contravention notice, restraining order and/or suspension and not even know, since it could be served on someone other than the owner or director. This could result in mounting daily fines or even closure. This bill could result in a horrifying backlog of program approvals. This bill would ensure that a school had very little recourse if faced with contravention and/or program revocation. This bill would significantly increase the current level of confusion and frustration about program approval standards due to the subjective nature of policy creation. If found guilty of an offence, one could face the possibility of going bankrupt due to exorbitant fines.

"We need positive legislation that protects the rights and interests of both students and schools, and is geared to support and encourage excellence in education."

Maxine Schacker, the director, is bang on in terms of a wonderful short summary of the concerns of private career colleges.

Madam Speaker, I probably forgot to mention at the beginning that I will be sharing my debate time with my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, and perhaps others.

I'll just go through this. The tremendous power the superintendent has: The superintendent now would, without notice and without warrant, be able to enter premises—pretty heavy-handed stuff. He or she at the ministry who is given this power on behalf of the minister would be able to just cancel a program midway through.

We tried to make sure there was some sort of recourse for schools that were being challenged by the ministry. Legitimate schools, many of them carrying on for years, have a hard time going to the bank and staying solvent,

because the bankers look at them—this is one thing that was brought up—saying, "Wow, at any time, you could be shut down with no recourse, no tribunal, no court, nothing." If they don't like you at the ministry, they could just shut you down. That's what these new powers do. I don't know of too many government ministries that have that kind of power, other than public health and safety.

The students don't seem to have any rights. We introduced amendments to make sure the students would get refunds if their program was suddenly cancelled—again, their registered program that was approved is suddenly cancelled.

I'm not sure how we ended up with all the amendments. We don't even have the amended bill in front of us, because we just had clause-by-clause yesterday, but I don't think that part of the act got clarified to the satisfaction of students.

The fines do increase, but again that's for schools that are registered. If you're not registered and you're committing fraud, then, like Bestech Academy—I think that's the one I was going to refer to. That was the famous one—I can't find it at the moment—that was in the news a couple of years ago and that probably started the series of news stories on unregistered schools. The lady who ran that academy down in the Niagara area, I think, in southwestern Ontario, wasn't registered. She just pretended to have a school, ran it out of her house and didn't pay any of her bills to her creditors. Long story short, the ministry, over three years, used moral suasion to try to shut her down and have her stop registering students and pretending to be teaching them. Again, she was unregistered and wouldn't fall under this act, so I don't know what would happen. But it turns out—the irony of it, we found out in the news—that the government ended up hiring the lady. She became staff in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and—

Interjection.

Mr. Jim Wilson: No, you guys hired her, I say to the minister. You guys hired them. After we have a little break for bells, I'll be sure to find my notes on Bestech Academy.

Again, it has all happened so fast. The motion we're discussing right now to shut down debate is, I think, 40 minutes on a bill that's really wide-ranging and that only had a couple of hours of hearings and short notice to the people who are affected.

Let me just remind people—and I did get my note here—there are 425 career colleges on 500 campuses. There are more than 27,684 students, it's believed, pursuing degrees in 3,425 approved programs in more than 70 communities. There are 17 privately funded universities in Ontario, which are included in this bill. Examples would be Emmanuel Bible College, the Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies and other Jewish schools that are on this list. There are 29 institutions that offer degree programs by ministerial consent, which will be captured under this bill.

Private institutions include Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, which has an excellent worldwide reputation, Cornell University, Niagara University and Trinity Western University, and there are other public colleges that are permitted to grant degrees instead of diplomas, including Sheridan, Seneca, Niagara, Loyalist and other Ontario colleges.

Because of the lack of consultation and this closure motion, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1626 to 1656.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Wilson has moved adjournment of the debate. All those in favour will rise and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed will please rise and be counted.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 9; the nays are 37.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Further debate?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again, it's a shame that we have to ring the bells to make points around here about the lack of consultation that the government has with the opposition parties with respect to even what the business of the House is going to be, let alone on Bill 43, which is what we're—well, we're discussing the closure motion of Bill 43. We will have third reading—a very short, one-hour third reading; 20 minutes for each party—to speak on Bill 43, which is An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002.

I want to reiterate, because I met with the president of the Ontario College of Art and Design recently—just yesterday, I guess—before we did clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 43. She was very kind to point out that it was our government that brought in the Ontario College of Art & Design Act in 2002, which set them on their journey to become a full-fledged university. Certainly, I and my caucus colleagues wish them well.

As I said on second reading debate, it's a real shame that this poison pill has been put in with this Bill 43, the rest of this legislation.

Hon. John Milloy: Not a poison pill.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Not a poison pill—this is good news. Thank you, Minister, for being helpful for a change. The good news, sorry—as the minister corrects me. The Ontario College of Art and Design is on its way to becoming a full-fledged university with the word and designation of "university" in the title of the college. Congratulations to them. It was the former PC government that set them on that journey with their first piece of legislation.

I can remember doing Algoma College, which became Algoma University not too many years ago—I was the critic, so it was within the last two or three years.

Ryerson Polytechnic Institute became a university during my time here at the Legislature many years ago, I guess under the NDP, in the early 1990s to mid-1990s. They were given their own set-aside piece of legislation—stand-alone piece of legislation—and it was customary for the government to brag about the accomplishments of these institutions moving from one level of post-secondary education to another designated level of post-secondary education. Unfortunately, this government, for political purposes, stuck their wonderful piece of news in the back of Bill 43.

1700

To make the point, we did vote in committee, I and the honourable member from Leeds–Grenville, Steve Clark. He and I served on the committee, and yesterday, we did vote for all those sections that did make the Ontario College of Art and Design a full-fledged university with its own board of governors and all the bells and whistles that it'll be able to offer now as a university.

Probably the best use of my time is to not really paraphrase all the submissions we had. There were quite a few, and these are the ones in my hand that came in on May 19 and May 20, and up until basically yesterday. That was after—because there was no consultation with the sector, the over 425 schools that are affected by this legislation. The only consultation, as I said a few minutes ago before the bell, was they got a phone call the night before the bill was introduced and they were basically not told the whole truth about the legislation. It happened to be the day that the legislation was introduced, and you would remember this, Madam Speaker. The private career colleges had an MPP day here, and they had a reception downstairs. I went down to the reception after the bill was introduced here in the chamber and I handed a copy to one of the attendees, and then ended up getting about 30 copies for them and bringing it down. They were just shocked. It ruined their reception, and they really felt betrayed by the government, but also nervous because the government has such tremendous powers to shut down these small businesses, in most cases. The DeVrys of the world—DeVry college and that used to be in Ontario; they actually left Ontario, I was told in committee hearings, because of the business climate in this province and because of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and its already high-handedness even before this legislation takes effect, and basically putting a bad feeling in the sector.

There are bad apples in this sector, but again, this legislation, as far as I can tell, unless our legal advice is off the ball, isn't going to go very far to catching those fraudulent institutions or people who pretend to be running an institution and training people in a fraudulent way and aren't true private career colleges. That is the point of the Ontario private career college association: They only have registered members that can become part of the association, so why are you going after the vast majority, 95% or 96% of schools that have done a good job, some of them for 200 years? It was pointed out, during committee hearings, that we do have some schools that have been around for almost 200 years. We said that many of them have been around for 100 years, and they have trained thousands—millions, I guess—of Ontarians, Canadians and international students in the trades and, as I said, in many niche markets that our current publicly funded post-secondary institutions don't necessarily cover.

Norine Roussain, owner of Career Blazers—here's what she says about Bill 43:

"What are the main risks to your school and our sector?—Bill 43.

"I feel that this bill was designed to make it easier to close schools regardless of their success or past reputations.

"It's one-way communication and disastrous to a small business. With this bill they can cause school closures without any discussion from the school. Isn't this against our constitutional rights?" she asks. "As a small business owner, we have rights and they are now being violated without this bill. If this bill passes it will be worse."

"This is the kind of unfair practice that you see on TV in other countries and we are thankful that we live in Canada. Now we have them in Canada. Scandalous!

"My father and my husband's father both fought in World War II. They fought to make this country a better place, free from terrorists and tyrants."

The private career colleges "(TCU) sector"—that's training, colleges and universities—"is very much like tyrants and unless you walk in my shoes, you will not understand that. Try communicating with some of the PCCs or go to one of their meetings and you will be appalled at what you discover." She goes on, referring to the relationship with the ministry.

This is Robert Barclay; Driven to Success is the name of the school:

"Sir, I want to voice my concerns with Bill 43. This bill potentially gives the superintendent complete, unhindered and overreaching powers of program approval/revocation relating to whatever the 'sore point of the day is.' This bill could decimate an entire 'type' or 'class' of programs. I could be served with a contravention notice, restraining order and/or suspension and not even know, since it could be served on someone other than myself"—we had an example in committee of an order that was served to an old address; the college was being fined and threatened by the ministry and never did receive the proper notice—"resulting in mounting daily fines or even closure. This bill could result in a horrifying backlog of program approvals."

We tried to bring in an amendment that would ensure that program approvals were done in a timely manner. We were told in committee that some of these approvals take one to two years. These are small businesses, and they're trying to respond to the marketplace. They can't wait. If a company needs new welders or a certain type of welding, they need it done—they need the training put in place right away. They can't wait one or two years for the government bureaucracy in the ministry to bring an

approval in. By that time, somebody else, probably in another country, has filled that niche and that training, and again our small businesses is hurt.

Again, Robert Barclay says, "This bill would ensure that a school had very little recourse for contravention and/or program revocation. This bill would significantly increase the current level of confusion and frustration about program approval standards due to the subjective nature of policy creation. If found guilty of an offence I could face the possibility of going bankrupt due to exorbitant fines. I believe this bill needs to be stopped and changes made after consultation with stakeholders."

That's what we got time and time again. The people who do know about this bill don't like it.

My caucus doesn't like most of the bill and will be voting against it. We don't like time allocation. For those reasons, I move a motion to adjourn the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Wilson has moved a motion to adjourn the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1707 to 1737.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those in favour will please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): The ayes are 6; the nays are 40.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Further debate? The member for Trinity–Spadina.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We've got to give the members some time to leave, Madam Chair.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no, you guys are busy. No, no, you go right ahead. Don't you worry about us. We can handle this. We're okay.

Mr. David Zimmer: Have you got your talking points from your caucus?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yeah, yeah. Thanks so much.

Bill 43: I want to make some comments because the comments we made on second reading I thought were very, very pertinent, but there was one deputant in particular who came in front of the committee who said some remarkable things that shed light on this bill in a way that I believe has helped me, and I suspect many of the Liberals, at least those who were attentive, with some things that enlightened all of us, I hope. I want to quote her because—first, I'm going to quote some other lawyer who makes this comment, but everyone made it. Well, it's not a lawyer, but a group of lawyers: Fogler, Rubinoff conglomerate. They say, "To the best of our knowledge, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities ... did not consult with the private career college sector prior to first reading of the bill. We note as well that Minister Milloy did not make any mention of the proposed legislation at the annual Ontario Association of Career Colleges conference held at Blue Mountain just prior to first reading. Had any prior consultation with stakeholders occurred, then the ministry would have been apprised of the adverse and inadvertent consequences that the proposed legislation would have had upon private career colleges, students, and Ontario's economy."

1740

I thought that was a telling point, because normally when we change regulations, when we introduce bills, we tend to speak to those who are otherwise affected, just to give them a heads-up; just to say that we're working as a team; just to say, "By the way, we're making these changes. Do you have any suggestions?" What the deputants declared the day they came to the hearings was that the minister told them, "Don't worry. The changes are very minor, technical in nature. You don't have to worry about a thing."

When the bill was introduced, they were shocked, because as much as the minister, the parliamentary assistant and Monsieur Jeff Leal, the member from Peterborough—who spoke that particular day, who is quoted in the submission that I'm about to speak from. They all claimed, of course, that they're going after the rogue private college providers, and Paula Cooper says this bill has nothing to do with rogue operators. In fact, she says this bill does absolutely nothing to get at those who are providing a service that is either not good or that is fraudulent, where they're literally cheating those students from an education that they deserve, that they're paying for. The bill does absolutely nothing.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Exactly. But you have to vary the tone. You go up and down when you have to.

The member from Peterborough said, "Many of them arrive here, and unfortunately, we have predators out there who want to take advantage of new Canadians coming in and, like the old snake oil salesmen, often try to sell them a bill of goods very quickly. That can be a very disheartening experience for newcomers...."

So the member from Peterborough, the minister and the parliamentary assistant made it appear that this bill goes after those who would otherwise be predators for those immigrants who don't know what they're getting into.

So she makes a number of points that I believe are very, very pertinent. She says:

"I have read the debates, and many erroneously have come to the conclusion that this bill is necessary to crack down on criminals intent on hurting students. This is emphatically wrong. Let me be extraordinarily clear here: This bill has been completely misunderstood. Bill 43 is not about protecting students against illegal operators. Bill 43 focuses on how the ministry can revoke approval of an already approved program and its associated credential and then force the school to reapply. The point

that is being missed is that the reason for the revocation is not due to some issue of contravention but rather administrative triggers. The most concerning change is the addition that this requirement can also be triggered by some 'to be determined' policy directive.

"The act states that in order for a school to offer an approved program, it must be registered. Hence, it is clear that the ministry plans to apply this amendment to compliant, registered colleges, not anyone intent on fraudulent activity" as has been claimed by the minister, by the member from Peterborough and the parliamentary assistant.

She goes on: "There has been considerable reference in the debates to the Ombudsman's report on this sector. There were two reports, one for privates and one for public. The common denominator in both of these reports was systemic failures by the ministry. The common message I read is that TCU requires better internal organization, not increased power."

That's an interesting observation. It's a criticism I have often made of this ministry, that something is wrong in this ministry when they do not, cannot, seem not to want to fix a problem when it arises—before it arises. That's an internal problem. It's not for lack of powers, because the powers are there. They just haven't been using those powers. I think it's because, administratively, they've got a big problemo internally.

She says, and this is another interesting observation that I have made, which I supplemented when she came in front of the committee, "Since proclamation of the act the ministry has undergone enormous change. There have been no less than four superintendents in four years with a couple interim acting superintendents; staff has significantly increased; there have been three major reorganizations; staff turnover has been staggering; school portfolios have changed hands internally more times than I can count. But, there has not been any formal training offered to TCU staff or sector, except for one presentation in 2006. The result of these changes is the following:

"—unbelievable powers of investigation...;

"—very little training for inspectors and investigators...;

"—no ongoing training for the sector.

"TCU investigative staff does not have a clear understanding of their roles.... There is a great deal of documented evidence to support this statement. For example, one TCU inspector has made the following statement in writing: 'I anticipate in advance of any discussion with my colleagues that you will never see 100% consistency with program approval.'"

She says, "This raises the obvious question, how then do you expect schools to follow the rules and be 100% compliant, then require them to accept the consequences of those policies when there is no transparent understanding?"

The problem is "systemic failures by the ministry." This is an important point. We have had four ministers in the last five or six years. We have had four or five deputy ministers. She reminds us that there have been four superintendents in four years, meaning they come and they go. Assistant deputies, they come and they go. Ongoing staff comes and goes. You get the picture, Minister? You understand? You've got a problemo internally.

Hon. John Milloy: No, we fixed it.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, I don't know that you've fixed it. I really don't. I don't know that you fixed that, Minister.

That is why I'm profoundly worried about whether or not what we need are bigger fines to go after those, those—

Hon. John Milloy: First you told us we weren't tough enough; now you're saying we're too tough.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But, Minister, you weren't there when I told you the following: You can levy a fine up to $100,000 today. Do you know what your top fine has been so far that has been levied against someone for inappropriate reasons? You remember, don't you? Because you were in committee and I told you that one.

Mr. Dave Levac: What did I tell you?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Dave Levac from Brant remembers. Tell the minister, to help him, because he's got a lot of paper. It's 39,000 bucks. We haven't even applied the maximum yet. Dave Levac says, "Yeah, that's because the courts decide." Because it's like an elastic: They could decide it could be $39,000, it could be $100,000 or it could be $250,000. The point is that we haven't even applied the maximum of $100,000.

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Mr. Dave Levac: Not we; the courts.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. But Dave Levac from Brant sustains, based on the argument, that we might need a higher amount in the event that the courts might want to go beyond $100,000 and need to go to $250,000. Do you understand, Speaker?

The point is that if we haven't even levied what we have on the books so far, to pretend that we're going to be tougher by adding an increased amount on those registered colleges that are not, generally speaking, in violation, except the rogue ones that we can't go after because they probably don't have any money to go after—you're going to go after people who are illegally doing stuff where there is no money to get out from. Do you understand? This is for the registered private colleges, not the rogue, predatory ones, right? So what's in this bill except to give, brothers and sisters, more power to the superintendent based on policy directives?

Don't get me wrong. I suspect I might even agree with what the minister wants the superintendent to do from time to time. It's quite possible that I might potentially agree with some directive that the superintendent may issue at some point in the future. It's quite possible. But you understand, if you've got huge problems internally where people come and go, it's quite possible that you might get some superintendent who might decide on his or her own to issue a directive without consulting the minister, although I doubt that they might do that, but they could, and because that new superintendent might

want to eagerly get at a problem, they may issue a directive that could scare the living wits out of many of these private colleges, and they were scared. They were scared.

Dave Levac from Brant, you will admit that many of those private colleges have genuine fears. They said, "We want you to go after the bad ones because they make us look bad. We want you to be tough on them. Go after them." But the changes you have made in this bill without any consultation with them—the Private Career Colleges Act changes in the bill on page 13 were done without any consultation with these people.

That's a bit of a problem you have, because Liberals are fond of saying, "We work with our partners." Jeff, we're like this with our partners, right?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Usually.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Imagine them to be completely taken by surprise.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Oh, come on, Rosie.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Lou, they were taken by surprise, all of them. They were all angry. These are private college people. They were genuinely angry. I tell you, I went in there thinking, I'm not on their side, but when I heard their submission, it was difficult not to hear what they said. It was difficult to pretend I didn't hear, I didn't see. That's the problem I had.

In order for me to be objective—as good Liberals, you would want me to be objective, I hope, because you often claim you have that standard of "by any objective measure," which the Premier often says. You guys often say that. By any objective standard, you failed the test of not adequately consulting these people, so they are angry.

The parliamentary assistant said, "Don't worry," to them. I heard you. So, as we go on from here, not in the past but in the future, we will be together.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Again.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, not again, because you never were like this before, so it's hard to do it again.

The parliamentary assistant said, "Look, I know you're angry. We didn't consult you," although he didn't quite say it that way. "But don't worry; from now on when we make regulatory changes, we're going to talk to you. You'll be there. You'll be part of those discussions."

What can you say? I say to myself, okay, do I believe the PA? I don't know; I really don't know. Trust is a very delicate thing. Trust is based on what you build; it's part of that foundation. If the foundation is not there, they say, "If they didn't consult me before, now that they passed this bill that gives extraordinary powers to the superintendent without any adequate consultation, should a repeal of whatever they're doing happen without any adequate time for us to be able to do an appeal, what do we do?" But Jeff Leal from Peterborough says, "Well, you've got to trust us." I just don't know about that. I'm with them. I happen to be on their side on that one.

I'm going to support your bill, but I have to tell you, you didn't do this well. They raised legitimate concerns. Amendments were made by my Tory friend from Simcoe–Grey. Many I supported, in fact. If I have time—I have a couple of minutes—I'm going to speak to some of them, because they raise good points. Jeff Leal from Peterborough, just in case you missed them:

One PC motion said:

"If review requested

"(8) If a person who has received a notice of contravention applies for a review under subsection (6), the minister shall conduct the review in a reasonable time and shall commence the review within 30 days after he or she has received the notice under subsection (6)...." Then we follow the Liberal motion, which says, "and shall otherwise conduct the review in accordance with the regulations." So what the Tories have added by way of listening to the deputants is that they should conduct the review in a reasonable time and commence a review within 30 days.

I thought that was a reasonable request. By any objective standards that the Liberals like to use, that amendment was a reasonable amendment. Of course, all of your Liberal buddies on the team rejected that—

Mr. Jeff Leal: I wasn't on that committee then.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But your friends, all your Liberal friends, rejected that suggestion.

Here is another simple one:

"(3) The minister shall ensure that the amount of the penalties prescribed under clause (1)(h) and the amount of any fines prescribed in respect of this act under the Provincial Offences Act are publicly available on a website maintained by the ministry and are otherwise reasonably made available to members of the public."

I thought that was a reasonable request. The parliamentary assistant said, "We do that already." Well, it's curious to me that those in the field don't seem to be aware of it, but the parliamentary assistant says, "Oh, no, no, no; we do this already." So I said to the PA, "But if you do it and this motion makes that redundant, so what?" Reach out. Throw them some crumbs and say, "Okay, we agree with you. We're going to post it. Even though we do it"—because you claim you do—"we're going to do it." A reasonable request by any objective standard, and all of the five Liberals who were there rejected that.

Do you understand what I'm saying? It's like when governments introduce things and they say, "We listened." It's like Mr. Gerry Phillips today—the Minister of Government Services—"We listened to what people have said about retirement homes," and then the NDP says, "But we had 92 amendments." So you listened, but we don't know who you were listening to, because the 92 amendments the New Democrats made weren't even touched, except one or two technical ones that you probably agreed with, but everything else of substance was denied and defeated. Similarly with most of these suggestions: They would have made the bill just a little bit better. It's these kinds of things that create mistrust in the sector, and you ought to worry about that. You really should.

There is a component of this bill that we support, and the Tories support it too. The poor member from

Simcoe–Grey was saying that he wants to support the bill—not the bill, but he wants to support the change to the Ontario College of Art and Design to the Ontario College of Art and Design University. He would have loved to have supported that snuck-in component of the bill, but unfortunately, he's going to vote against it because of other elements that he disagrees with. I agree with you on that, and I've got no problems with that.

The fine situation I already spoke to and told you that I'm not sure how effective it's going to be, given that you haven't levied the maximum so far, except that you want to—Speaker, you tell me whenever you think the time is up.

With the levies, you think you're going to show yourself to be tough and tougher than before, but it's not going to do anything, really—not that part of it.

The other part deals with the elements that I have mentioned, that the private college folks spoke to, and they're really worried. I've got to tell you—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45.

The House recessed from 1800 to 1845.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
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Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
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Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

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Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
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Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
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Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
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Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
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Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
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Maria Van Bommel
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Second Session, 39th Parliament

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 1 June 2010

Mardi 1er juin 2010

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 June 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1er juin 2010

The House recessed from 1800 to 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Government order 17. Further debate?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate on the proposed Post-Secondary Education Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010.

Obviously the intent of this legislation is to give the choice to students and to give protection to students who choose to use the private career college route as a means to obtaining skills and the education they need to enter or to change the sort of work that they're engaged in or to enter the educational system.

The amendments strengthen the ability of the government to shut down those people who have proven themselves to be unscrupulous and unauthorized educational organizations. The idea is to prevent them from taking advantage of any international or even Ontario students who are perhaps considering using their services.

The amendments we have before us are designed to ensure that post-secondary education programs offered here in Ontario are of the highest quality available and they meet the standards of excellence that I think all members of the House want to see in our educational institutions.

Introducing the legislative amendments that are proposed today certainly supports and backs up our Open Ontario plan that's going to create new opportunities for jobs and growth within the economy, and it's going to raise the number of Ontarians with post-secondary education to the 70% that we know we need to make our mark in the global economy.

The PSECE Act actually came into effect in 2001, and that was to expand access to degree programs, improve student protection and implement quality assurance for the new degree programs that institutions were offering. This act actually allows private institutions from both inside and outside Ontario, public out-of-province institutions and colleges of applied arts and technology that we're all familiar with to apply to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to offer degree-granting programs.

The act also created the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, which has implemented rigorous quality controls that protect Ontario students from those institutions that have developed a reputation as simply being degree mills. However, it seems that a number of organizations have decided to challenge the Post-Secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act and the government's ability to ensure the quality of Ontario's post-secondary education brand, which is of the highest quality. For example, some organizations have set up an office—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'm to sit down now, Speaker; is that right?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Smith has moved government motion number 17. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government order 17 be deferred until deferred votes," and it's dated June 2, 2010.

Vote deferred.

1850

TIME ALLOCATION

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Smith has moved government order 14.

Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak to the time allocation motion on Bill 191, Far North Act. Unfortunately, the way it works these days—

Mr. Jim Wilson: What a way to run this place.

Mr. Norm Miller: As the member from Simcoe–Grey just said beside me, "What a way to run this place." It was the fact that we in opposition have no idea what bills—and I say that the opposition House leader might want to stay around for a few minutes. We have no idea what bill might be called at any given time. So, as a result, as the opposition we don't necessarily have our critic here to be able to speak to the bill. So we just have to get up and, unfortunately, it really affects the quality of the debate when our critic's not here, when we don't know what bill's going to be called and we have to just stand up and start speaking off the cuff.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Why don't you tell us the agenda?

Mr. Norm Miller: It would be nice. As was mentioned on a point of order by the opposition House leader, there is actually standing order 56, and I think I should refer to standing order 56, as a matter of fact. Standing order 56 states, "Before the adjournment of the House on each Thursday during the session, the government House leader shall announce the business for the following week." That seems pretty darned clear to me, that the government House leader on Thursday before the next week outlines the business for the following week.

I note that the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, when the Progressive Conservative government was in power—I'm getting lots of notes handed to me here from my associates—pointed out that when he was government House leader, they followed that. It's pretty clear. It says they "shall announce the business for the following week." Not only that, he also had courtesy for the opposition. If there were new bills introduced on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, he wouldn't call them for debate until after the caucus on the following Tuesday, so he'd give the opposition a chance to actually look at the bill, get a briefing and get a bit of time to discuss it.

That is certainly not the case now. We get situations where the bill is introduced on the Monday, they have the briefing Monday afternoon and it's debated Tuesday morning before we've even had an opportunity to caucus it. The unfortunate part of that is that there's just not a chance for the opposition to do some research, to prepare, to increase the quality of the debate.

Unfortunately, the reason we are sitting here this evening—and I gather we're sitting to midnight again. We sat till 12:30 last night, and it might be 12:30 this evening as well for the government members. The reason we're sitting is because—the opposition was working with the government. We thought we had an agreement with the government on a programming motion. In fact, we went under that agreement for a week where we wouldn't be having any night sittings.

All we asked for—it was a fairly simple request—was one afternoon, a couple of hours for an opposition debate on the HST, so that there'd be a vote of all the members on postponing implementation of the HST to after the next election because, in the 2007 election, as the member from Sudbury would know, there was no discussion about implementing the HST. I don't remember seeing that in any Liberal brochures at all.

Interjections.

Mr. Norm Miller: It was not in the Liberal brochures.

Unfortunately, we're sitting till midnight this evening, and because of that, in protest, the opposition has been forced to use some tactics to draw things out a bit. So, Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Miller has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1855 to 1925.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka, has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise to be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 8; the nays are 34.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: Madam Speaker, that was close.

I'm pleased to continue debate on the time allocation motion on Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North. This bill—it's interesting—was put out after first reading. Before any debate, it travelled around the north a bit—I think two of our members went along on those committee hearings—and from what I understand, especially the First Nations population is quite opposed to the bill and would like to see further consultation on the bill before it goes forward. I do have a letter from Grand Chief Stan Beardy from the Nishnawbe Aski Nation on his concerns, which I will try, if I have time, to get on the record.

I did have the opportunity, a year and a half or so ago, with our past leader, John Tory, who was interested in the Far North, to go with Grand Chief Stan Beardy. We chartered a plane and flew out of Thunder Bay up to Fort Severn, the most northerly community in Ontario, on the coast of Hudson Bay. We spent half the day there and learned about the situation there. I can tell you it's a pretty desperate situation. They were using a temporary school, with really very few recreational facilities—some very enthusiastic young teachers. It was just about the start of the school year; I think it was late August when we were there. A pretty challenging situation in that particular community, with really not much economic opportunity, and that relates to this bill, because I think the Far North First Nation communities are looking for economic opportunity.

We then flew with Grand Chief Stan Beardy from Fort Severn down to Webequie, which is in this now often talked about Ring of Fire—at that point I don't think I had heard too much about it—where this big chromite ore discovery has been made. It's in a ring, and Webequie is at about the centre.

At that time, especially a year and a half ago, all kinds of diamond drilling activity was going on. The First Nation community was benefiting from that, with a lot of joint ventures; a really different picture than Fort Severn. The day I happened to be there with John Tory there was a festival going on and there was bustling activity around the band council. We met with the chief. It really was quite good to see all the activity going on—quite a different scene from Fort Severn—and that was because of the economic activity that was occurring.

1930

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Who was the chief? Do you know his name?

Mr. Norm Miller: The member for Sudbury is heckling me from across the way, asking me if I remember the chief. I do recall that unfortunately the chief wasn't re-elected, so it's now a different chief than was previously there. But there was a lot of activity going on there and quite a positive attitude in the community because of the Ring of Fire and the diamond drilling etc. that was going on.

Unfortunately, with this Far North bill that the government is bringing in, first of all, the First Nations communities are not in favour of it so far, and I would like to get on the record a letter from Stan Beardy if I have time—I know I don't have a lot of time. I'll just summarize a bit of it to point out his concerns: May 5, so a quite recent letter, to Premier Dalton McGuinty; the Minister of Natural Resources, Michael Gravelle; the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry; and Chris Bentley, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

He begins: "To begin my communication with you, I would like to start out by saying that First Nations in Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) have a say on what happens on their homelands and that anything that may happen on their homelands will require their free, prior and informed consent. First Nations want to secure economic opportunities for their communities and future generations"—that's the point I was trying to make in my story about my day-long trip up there—"and also have a sacred responsibility to the Creator to care for the land. First Nations have always determined their uses of the land and will continue to do so. Bill 191 conflicts with these principles and approach to the land, therefore I have been asked by the First Nations in NAN to send you the following message.

"As Bill 191 continues to be considered for second reading in session 2, Parliament 39 in the Ontario Legislative Assembly, the First Nations in NAN would like to remind you and other members of Parliament that they oppose the bill as it is currently written"—oppose the bill as it is currently written.

"NAN First Nations have been consistent in their opposition to the bill since it was first read and carried on June 2, 2009. NAN First Nations continue to oppose the bill even though the Standing Committee on General Government reviewed it and made amendments on October 22, 2009."

He wrote a long letter; I'm sure I won't have time to get through the whole letter so, unfortunately, I won't read it. But they did pass a resolution.

Interjections.

Mr. Norm Miller: I see the government members think this is funny, but this is very serious if you're in the Far North.

"Whereas the government of Ontario introduced new laws, such as Bill 191, the Far North Act, while Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), in good faith, was undertaking its obligations under the letter of political agreement (LOPA) and the Oski-Machiitawin (OM) process;

"Whereas Ontario is preparing to table Bill 191 for second reading in the Ontario Legislature during the spring of 2010;

"Whereas this time frame presents a challenge to NAN First Nations that wish to have input into any revisions prior to second reading"—that is the crux of the matter, really, because we are discussing a time allocation motion, and the time frame is one of their major concerns.

I would say that this time allocation motion is not as bad as many of the other ones we're seeing this spring. It actually doesn't force it through in a day or two. It's going to allow for some input over the summer in a few northern communities in June, and then it gets referred back in September. So I would say to the First Nations communities that they would want to make sure they have their say, and hopefully the government will listen to their concerns with this bill, because they do have a lot of concerns.

I think northerners have a lot of concerns. Unfortunately, the north has been in large part abandoned by this government, because the interest groups that have the ear of the Premier at the current time are some of the very strong environmental groups. So groups like Environmental Defence and Rick Smith have a direct line into the Premier's office, and that is why we're seeing bills like Bill 191 coming through, despite the objection of the aboriginal communities and despite the fact that the government has been talking about its new relationship with First Nations communities. They are very clearly opposed to this legislation, and yet the government is ramming ahead with it.

I would say, from my past experience as northern critic, that one thing that is very clear is that northerners feel that decisions are all made in Toronto and it's very Toronto-centric decision-making. No matter where you go in the north you hear that a lot, and they feel isolated. That's probably why I've been learning in recent days about a new political party that's being created in the north, because despite the fact that there are government members from the north, it doesn't seem to matter. There are just way more southern Ontario members and way more Toronto members. As a result, despite their concern about having different policies for the north, it is ignored.

I don't have much more time, so I would like to quickly summarize the February 13, 2010, Northern Mayors Task Force, which in its executive summary points out that the government needs to:

"Develop provincial policies that support resource-based and emerging industries as well as promote the relocation of provincial ministries/agencies to northern Ontario"—that point was actually in the PC Party platform in the last election;

"Create a sustainable livelihood approach, based on economic and environmental considerations, for the management of northern resources;

"Improve northern highways, assist with municipal road challenges and support the expansion of alternatives to road transportation."

They go on to point out in the background how they're really concerned with some of the legislation that the government is bringing in, like the Endangered Species Act. They go on to say, "One of the key issues with respect to the Endangered Species Act is based on the designation of the woodland caribou as a threatened species and its subsequent conservation plan. This is yet another example ... where consultation, concrete scientific data and northern Ontario needs were absent in the decision-making process. The potential impacts and issues of the conservation plan are as follows"—and they go on to list them in great detail. They are really concerned with that.

At the time that bill was passing through the Legislature, Mr. Ramsay was the Minister of Natural Resources. I would say he felt at that time that the Endangered Species Act—and he certainly communicated it here in the Legislature and in letters—would respect the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. The government ended up breaking their word on that so that it doesn't respect that.

Unfortunately, I'm out of time. In protest for the fact that the government—

Mr. Jim Wilson: Doesn't tell us anything.

Mr. Norm Miller: —doesn't tell us what legislation is going to be debated, despite standing order 56, and the fact that they wouldn't allow us to have one afternoon of debate on the HST, which they didn't even mention in their past election platform, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Miller has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1937 to 2007.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka, has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, stand to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 8; the nays are 33.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Ms. Smith has moved government order number 14. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government motion number 26, time allocation on Bill 191, be deferred."

Vote deferred.

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Ms. Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts, when the bill is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the vote on second reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for two days of public hearings in Toronto, and for two days for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, on dates provided for in a schedule of meeting dates agreed to by the three party whips and tabled with the Clerk of the Assembly; and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, September 13, 2010. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 28.

Debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: It is quite interesting that here we have a bill in front of the House called Open Ontario and they're closing off debate. That's just the oxymoron of the Liberal Party. I guess that really is the oxymoron: Here we have a socialist party pretending to be a liberal party.

There is so much that is incredible. Here is an omnibus bill. It affects 10 different ministries, and there's no time to discuss, no time to debate and, of course, no notification that we're going to be debating this bill this

evening. However, I'm sure the Minister of Agriculture would love to be here at this debate as she puts the thumb down on farmers in this province with her Open Ontario bill.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: We don't note people's absence from the Legislature.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I didn't say she was absent.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: You said the Minister of Agriculture would like to be here.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I believe he was right; you did make reference. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I apologize for the error of my ways.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You mean she's not here? Pardon me, Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): This is not a point of order.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I look forward to the Minister of Agriculture engaging in this debate on Bill 68 because I'm sure she will want to clarify to all the farmers in this province why she is taking away compensation for livestock predation in this province.

There has been so much information and public awareness in the last year over wolves and coyotes preying on and devastating livestock, and Open Ontario is going to close off compensation for farmers for livestock losses due to wolves and coyotes. I want to ask this question to all the members of the Liberal Party: Is that what you think is going to open the doors for Ontario, to take away a long-standing practice in this province of helping and assisting farmers who have lost livestock due to predators? This is what this Liberal government is all about: Say one thing, do another; promise one thing, do something else; make an oath—well, I'm not allowed to use that word when you break an oath. But anyway, that is just one example of the Open Ontario plan of this Liberal government.

There's also an interesting schedule in there for the Ministry of Labour under the Employment Standards Act. I find this quite interesting. Under the Employment Standards Act, the employment standards officers and the labour relations officers have complete and absolute immunity for their actions and their errors. I'll give you this example. A labour relations officer or an employment standards officer cannot be compelled into a civil action, cannot be compelled or allowed to give evidence in a civil action. What is this all about? Why is this Liberal government saying that our public service, our bureaucrats, cannot be compelled to provide evidence in a court of law? What are you protecting them from? What are you hiding from the people of Ontario? Why is it that public servants under the Ministry of Labour will not now be allowed to attend court in a civil action? There's something a little fishy, and it ain't in Denmark; it's right here in Queen's Park when we see these deceptive little ideas coming through these omnibus bills.

I think we also want to talk about how this government is on autopilot, absolutely on autopilot. The idea of political representatives overseeing the administration of government is lost on this Liberal government. We saw it with Bill 43, which we debated earlier, and we're seeing it in this one here as well, where the provincial government is saying, "Bureaucracy, do what you may. Do what you want. There will be no political oversight from the Liberal government." I think the people of Ontario demand and expect some level of oversight and some level of management by their elected representatives. But no, this government is very, very content to just allow the bureaucracy to run the machinery of government.

There is a little change in the Conservation Authorities Act in this bill. Previously, before this bill, a conservation authority could not dispose of crown land that it was granted without the minister's approval. Now, with this slight little change of ink, conservation authorities no longer need the minister's approval. They can dispose of crown land, the crown land that this government is a steward of for the public of this province. They're just going to say, "Mr. Bureaucracy, you can do what you like with it. You don't have to come back to the Legislative Assembly. You don't require any oversight. We allow you and we expect you to just dispose of that money, dispose of those properties in any way that you like." Now, isn't that interesting?

Isn't it interesting that this government—and we saw another good example of that today in the Auditor General's report. I want to read just a wee little bit from the Auditor General's report on the OLG today, because I think this really represents a government on autopilot: "In January 2008, OLG applied to be exempted from the MBC travel directive. Its rationale was that as an arm's length agency..." However, the OLG never got a response back from the Minister of Infrastructure.

Interjection: The former minister.

Mr. Randy Hillier: The former minister; I think he took a dive somewhere along the line.

However, the OLG requested a minister of this government for a ruling on their expenditures. But they never got an answer from this Liberal government. So what did the OLG do? The OLG said, "We didn't hear back from them, so it must be okay if we spend $60,000 a year on cars. It must be okay if we give people $24,000 in allowances."

A total abdication of their responsibilities is what we have seen from this government, a total and complete abdication. We saw the total and complete contempt for this Legislative Assembly as we debated Bill 191 this morning. I started off this morning debating Bill 191 time allocation, we then debated time allocation on Bill 43 and now we're debating time allocation on Bill 68. Nobody from this Liberal government notified the parties that this bill was going to be up for debate. They never identified that there was going to be a time allocation motion—absolute contempt for democracy but a total embrace of bureaucracy by this government.

We have seen time and time again—we've seen it with Bill 43, and we're seeing it with Bill 68—that the law-abiding people of this province are put under the thumb of this government, the law-abiding people are disregarded by this government, and with the people doing wrong, this government turns its back and turns a blind eye. That's what we see. We've seen it with the HST—total contempt. We see more and more regulations, and here, of course, we have the pocket edition of regulations for Ontario—3,500 pages. I challenge any Liberal member: Show me how deep your pockets are that you can put this book in it, your pocket edition of 3,500 pages, half a million regulations. Now we see more. The book keeps getting bigger and bigger. With every level of contempt that they show this Legislature, the regulations get thicker and thicker and our economy gets worse and worse.

We have seen the contempt with the HST, where they reneged on a deal with the House leaders that we could discuss and debate the HST. They're too cowardly to have a fulsome debate on the HST, too cowardly to have a debate on any bill, and they hide behind a time allocation. Then they have the contempt to not even discuss with the House leaders what they're bringing in.

I have no choice but to call for a motion to adjourn this debate until this Liberal government has the balls to stand up and talk and discuss in a fair and reasonable fashion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Hillier has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House to support this motion?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2024 to 2054.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Hillier has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 5; the nays are 29.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Hillier.

Mr. Randy Hillier: So, Bill 68—I'd like to put a little bit of perspective and context for the people who are watching this evening. Twelve hours ago, at 9 o'clock this morning, we were debating time allocation and closure on Bill 191. Then we debated time allocation and closure on Bill 43 and now, 12 hours later, 9 o'clock this evening, we have a bill that has been put forward in front of the House here without notice, Bill 68, called the Open Ontario act. Of course, it is the time allocation bill on this Open Ontario act. In 12 hours, this Liberal government has managed to put in three time allocation bills. That must be a record, and I'm glad that people will be seeing just what they think of Open Ontario.

I think it's important that we also demonstrate to the people of this province that this bill—152 pages of legalese by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade—was first introduced into this House on May 17. May 17 was the first reading. Now, less than two weeks later, it's a time allocation.

If the minister was truly honest with the people of this province, if the minister was truly honest with the people in this House, they would look at this bill that affects 10 ministries. If they really wanted to be honest and to achieve certain results, this bill should have been broken down into 10 bills, one for each of the ministries affected.

But no, that is not the Liberal way. It's not the socialist way of this governing party. This idea that an omnibus package of 10 ministries will be dumped in and will be disposed of in less than two weeks is another example of their contempt for this Legislature and contempt for democracy in this province.

Again, this Open Ontario act: When the minister does respond to Bill 68, I would like her to explain to the people of Ontario why employment standards officers cannot be compelled to go into a court of law on a Ministry of Labour action. Let me read this directly from the act; this is on page 132:

"Labour relations officers, etc., not compellable;

"(3) A person referred to in subsection 1"—that's the employment standards or labour relations officer—"is not a competent or compellable witness...."

Isn't that interesting? They're saying that a bureaucrat, an employee of the Ministry of Labour, "is not a competent or compellable witness in a civil proceeding or a proceeding under this act respecting any information given or obtained, statements made or received, or records or other things produced or received under this act."

I really want to hear from this minister why she believes that a person employed as an employment standards officer or labour relations officer is not a competent witness in a civil proceeding. I think everybody in this province wants to know. Why is that person protected and shrouded and hidden from the public scrutiny of the courts in their actions? Why is that? Why is an employee of the public service deemed by this Liberal government not to be a competent or a compellable witness?

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Then I want the Minister of Economic Trade and Development to go, later on today or whenever she has an opportunity, to schedule 1 of the act, on page 14, and I want her to explain how the changes in this bill on page 14 are going to improve the lot of farmers in this province. What doors is she opening on page 14 when she says in this bill that if you have a calf that is killed by a wolf, if you have some sheep or lambs that are killed by a wolf, if you have chickens that are killed by a coyote, you no longer have any compensation from this Liberal government?

Now, of course, you might have some justification other than the fact that it is this Liberal government and their Ministry of Natural Resources that has allowed the wolf and coyote problem to expand in this province. Their Ministry of Natural Resources refuses to do anything about the growing problem of wolves and coyotes. Then, as a Liberal solution, they're going to take away the compensation for farmers who are bearing the brunt of this.

Laughter.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Now I know the member from Winnipeg might think this is funny, but maybe he doesn't have farmers in his riding. I do, and I know there are many people in this House who have farmers who earn a living from their livestock in this province.

I know the member from Sudbury may not think it's important that people are losing their earnings, their livelihood, from predation, but people on this side of the House understand that our role is to represent our constituents' concerns.

This is their Open Ontario. This is their Open Ontario plan.

As I mentioned earlier, this government clearly is on autopilot. I don't know if there's a minister on the opposite side, I don't know if there's a minister within this Liberal government who actually understands the role and responsibility of oversight and what the concept of oversight is for their ministry. They're just so willing, so confident to provide all the legislative authorities to the bureaucracy and discount political oversight.

Again, I'll refer to page 9 of the Auditor General's report today on the OLG. We know he found all kinds of untoward practices and abuses of public finances under the OLG.

Of course, the OLG is one of those arm's-length Liberal agencies that they just love to create. They're actually going to be creating a few more under this act. I haven't even begun to talk about the new agencies.

Anyway, in 2008, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., that agency, requested from the Minister of Public Infrastructure—a direct request: "Minister, we want to have an exception on our expenditures." The answer was silence. The Minister of Public Infrastructure either was unable to make a response or didn't care to make a response and didn't do anything. Of course, the OLG, after making a request and not getting a response—this is the typical Liberal solution: "Well, if I asked for something and I don't hear back, then it's automatic that I get it"—right? That's what the OLG said: "We asked for an exception, but the minister was too busy to respond, or the minister didn't care, so we'll just take the exception anyway. That will allow us to drive $57,000 cars each year at public expense." That's page 9. I'm sure the ministers on the opposite side would love to see it.

But what I find incredible is this is not an exception. This is the rule with this Liberal government. So often we see just no interest by a minister to take responsibility for their ministry, no interest at all to take interest or concerns about their ministries. Just give it off, put it on autopilot: "We've got the keys in the ignition. The bureaucrats are running the ship," and that's okay with the Liberal Party. The ministers will collect their money, and who cares when the ship, or the car, hits the rocks? They just don't care.

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Hillier: The minister from Sudbury would love to go hunting, I guess. All he's talking about is hunting.

Anyway, we have seen that this is again one of the things that is so obvious with the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party reminds me of that old adage that there is nothing more deceptive than the obvious facts. This is a deception of this Liberal Party: "We'll call it an open door act, but then we'll close the door on farmers, we'll close the door on labour, we'll close the door on the conservation authorities, we'll close the door on development in this province—but we'll call it an Open Ontario act."

We see, in this, more and more regulations coming through—and of course that was another Liberal promise. Does everybody remember McGuinty's promise? "For every new regulation we bring in, we'll get rid of a regulation." That was another oath from the Liberal Party.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Are they in that book?

Mr. Randy Hillier: This is the book. In 2004, this book was 2,000 pages in length—2,000. It's now 3,500 pages. So much for getting rid of one regulation for every new one that they bring in. This book has doubled in size: half a million provincial regulations, and they're by this Liberal government. That's the pocket edition—the pocket edition: 500,000 regulations.

Let's just put this in perspective: Half a million activities are regulated by this Liberal government—half a million. I challenge each and every one of those members, I challenge them as a collective, to come up with half a million activities. They can't think of half a million activities by the whole bunch of them, but that's half a million activities that require a licence, that require an approval process, require a permit, require a delay in time. Half a million activities are now regulated by this government. And when you go to ask the minister, he says, "I don't know." He shrugs. The minister says, "I'd rather go deer hunting than deal with my ministry." That's what we get from this Liberal government. Now, I don't mind deer hunting at all; I actually enjoy it as well. But I know that you do your work first, before you go on the hunt.

Anyway, we have seen on and on and on this Liberal government using rhetoric and using words to disguise the reality. The reality in this act is that more and more doors will be closed in Ontario. More and more doors will be closed to opportunities, will be closed to business, will be closed to freedom, and will be closed even for discussion within this chamber. That's what they're doing: closing off discussion and debate in this chamber. That's what this Liberal government is all about, and it's nothing less than deceptive to call this an act to open the doors of Ontario. It is nothing more than creative, imag-

inative gallimaufry and mendacity. This Liberal government needs to get a handle on a few fundamental concepts.

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The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask you to withdraw the last comment you made.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

Anyway, it really is disgusting to see that this Liberal government is prepared to bring regulation after regulation after regulation and suffocate and strangle opportunities in this province. I guess the ultimate hypocrisy is also—

Interjection: You can't say that either.

Mr. Randy Hillier: The ultimate oxymoron of today is—

Interjection: Drop the "oxy."

Mr. Randy Hillier: It would be out of order to drop the "oxy," I believe.

Anyway, this morning we debated Bill 191, which will close off a quarter-million square kilometres of land in this province. A quarter-million acres of land will become the park of destitution and poverty in northern Ontario. It will close off any opportunities for development in hydro, roads, forestry, tourism, mining; close all that off, and at the same time they bring out a bill that says, "We're open for business." They close up the big barn doors and then they say, "We're going to open up a little crack with this one."

We know that any donkey can knock down the old barn doors. It takes somebody with some competency to build a door. Clearly, the people of Ontario know what's happening: They're knocking down the barn doors but don't have the competency to build something.

A quarter-million square kilometres, over 100 million acres of land—gone. No opportunities in the north when they bring in their Open Ontario act. I'd like the people of Ontario just to contemplate, just to think—and maybe the Liberals would like to think this evening as well. Think about this: If our province—we go back in time, go back to when this province was first being settled. If we had a government of the same ilk as we have today, a government that said that half the land is prevented from being developed, half the land is going to come under public control, a public park, what would our province look like today? What would our country be if we had a government of this mindset back in the early days of settlement of this country? Would we have a country at all? Would we have a province? Obviously not. Nobody would have come here if the government had said, "It's off limits. You can't come here. There are no opportunities. The door is open for you to leave and go somewhere else. The door is closed for all people to come and find wealth and prosperity in this province."

We know that this country, this province, would never have begun if we had a government of this attitude and ilk in our early days. We know that this Liberal government, if they are given the opportunity—we'll go back to a lower standard of living. We've already seen it. This engine of Confederation called Ontario has now become the caboose. We now have have-not status; we're now a have-not province. We are on Confederation's rolls of welfare under this McGuinty Liberal government.

So what do the Liberal ministers say? They say, "Who cares?" Pan the camera on the Liberal benches and see the ministers chuckling over there when we talk about 300,000 people who lost their jobs in manufacturing, when we see unemployment rates higher than the national average, when we see troubles and problems and a lowering standard of living, and the Liberals say, "Well, I get my paycheque every month. Everything must be good. Right? I get my paycheque every month. Liberal life is good." But we know that the people of Ontario cannot, will not stand for this tax and grab and spend government. Their days are numbered. Bills like Bill 68 are going to be the ones that put the nail in their coffin.

There is no way people will accept this government on autopilot, this contempt for our democracy, this loss of our democracy. There is no way that people will continue to accept just a total abrogation of ministerial responsibility. Of course, there is no greater example of their failure, no greater example of their contempt, no greater example of their broken promises, no greater example of their tax-and-spend ways than the HST, and no greater example of their contempt for the people of this province.

When they break their promises, when they break their oaths, when they break their deals with the House, when they refuse to allow a motion to be discussed on the HST, they hide, they run, they cower away—

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Other than the Minister of Revenue; he just is handcuffed and really can't say anything. But we know that they cower under—

Interjections.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I understand the Liberals have woken up at 9:15 on this night-sitting night. It's good to see there's some blood flowing over there for a change. Other than their creative and imaginative use of vocabulary, they have become awake now as well.

We have seen the contempt for this House. We have seen—

Mr. Jim Wilson: The House leader should resign.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Yes. Well, I'm not allowed to make reference to—

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Hillier: She's not here.

Anyway, it is clear that this Liberal government does not want to face the music of the people of this province. They do not want to face debate. They don't want to face the music that they're about to face. For 12 hours today, we have debated time allocation closures, time allocation bills, and for the balance of this session, I imagine that's all we're going to be doing: time allocation. There's no concern, no regard and no respect for parliamentary debate, no respect for House leaders' negotiations, and no respect for providing the opposition with a timely indication of what bills are coming up. Time allocation: That is what comes out of this Liberal government. Time allo-

cation—nothing more, nothing less, other than their rhetoric.

I know that the people of Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington and my colleagues in the Progressive Conservative Party have such a level of disdain for this Liberal government's actions that I move a motion to adjourn the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Hillier has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2120 to 2150.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Hillier has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 8; the nays are 31.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Don't change your dial. This is really me. It's 10 o'clock at night in the Ontario Legislature and I'm really here debating this—

Interruption.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh my God, Madam Speaker, that's my daughter. Natalie Bisson, if you just called me, you got me in trouble.

I want to say I was looking forward to having an opportunity to speak to this particular bill. I take it we're debating the Open Ontario bill, right? As whip, I know these things.

I've got to say to my friends across the way, I know that you're all saying, "We're just going to make things better in Ontario and we're just going to open things up for foreign investment to happen here in Ontario and we're going to make it easy for multinationals to come in and do business in Ontario." I want to say, you're doing a great job. You guys are doing an amazing job. You're giving the Xstratas of this world the opportunity to do what they would not dream of doing under any other government.

Xstrata said, "We're going to close down a refinery and smelter in the city of Timmins." Normally, they would not do these things lightly, because they would worry that the government of Ontario would say, "Hold it. You're closing what? You're closing a prime industry in Ontario? What can we do to help keep the doors open?" Xstrata said, "We pick our fights. We picked our fight well." We've got Dalton McGuinty with Open Ontario, and their idea that they don't want to get in the way of business, and we're just going to let them do it.

We're going to tell Xstrata that it's okay to shut down a smelter and refinery in the city of Timmins and move all those jobs to the province of Quebec and leave Ontario workers in the communities of Timmins, Smooth Rock Falls, Matheson and Iroquois Falls high and dry when it comes to employment and, more importantly, the opportunities that Xstrata presented to the businesses of the northeast region. This government said, "We're open for business. We want to let the multinationals do what they've got to do." They said to Xstrata, "Please, don't forget to turn off the lights when you leave Ontario."

So I say to the government across the way, if you're saying you want Open Ontario as a policy, you have a funny way of showing how Ontario is open. I would think that a government in Ontario would say they are going to do what has to be done to work with workers, to work with communities and to work with the private sector in order to determine what needs to be done to make sure we have a strong economy here in Ontario and that we have an ability to provide the robust economy that we have to have in this province to provide, yes, the private sector with the ability to make a profit, but also to give—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): There is too much noise.

Member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, I know you weren't saying I was making too much noise. I think you were saying everybody in the House was making too much noise, just to be clear.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My good friend said that was just a call.

I just want to say that the government says "Open for business"; all I'm saying is the job of this Legislature and the job of the government of Ontario, simply put, is to say, "What can we do to create the conditions that allow the private sector to make a profit in Ontario, that allow them to do it in a way that's sustainable to the environment and does it in a way that is sustainable to the economy and gives workers and businesses the opportunity to prosper in this province?"

What did the government do?

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, I'm a social democrat. You Conservatives have never known. You Conservatives don't even understand what an economy is about. It's social democrats who understand this stuff. We understand there's a balance between the private sector and the workers in the communities, and you have to have that dynamic of what goes on between those three parties to make things work. There's a fourth party, and that is government. Government could be used as a tool to help the economy along.

So I say to my friends across the way, the McGuinty Liberals, yes, you want to open Ontario, but you've got a fine way of showing it. You've allowed a company named Xstrata—you've said, "You can pick up shop in Ontario, out of the city of Timmins, you can close your plant down, you can leave and go produce in Quebec—and by the way, when you mine the copper in Ontario,

take it with you. Add no value to it in the province of Ontario." Can you imagine Ralph Klein in British Columbia, can you imagine Danny Williams in Newfoundland, can you imagine any Premier in this province who would say, "I will allow foreign multinationals to come into Ontario," or their province, to take the natural resources from the ground and move them out of their province and add value to them outside their own province? Shame on you, Open Ontario for business. You're not opening Ontario; you're closing down opportunities for people here in Ontario.

If you travel south down Highway 144—my good friend France Gélinas will know the town well; she lives there—in the communities around Sudbury—you've had how much now, 10 months?

M^me^ France Gélinas: Eleven.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: For 11 months we've had a strike out at Inco—now it's called Vale Inco. What we have there is a company that has decided, "We're a multinational come from afar. We've come from Brazil. We're going to come to Ontario and tell workers and tell communities, 'You know what? Your pension's too rich. We're going to take your pension that you worked hard to get over a period of years; we're going to take it away from you.' We're going to say that any new employee who is hired at Vale Inco is not going to have a defined pension plan as your fathers and your brothers did, as they're hired there now."

What does this government do? That's what they did: the sound of crickets; absolutely nothing. Why should we allow a foreign multinational to come and set up shop here in Ontario and say, "We are going to change on its ear the social contract that exists with the workers in Sudbury with Vale Inco and the community and the workers of the city of Sudbury"?

In addition to that, the government says, "It's okay. We're not going to intervene," when Vale Inco says, "We're going to change the nickel bonus." I want to say to my friends across the way and I want to say to people in northeastern Ontario, and specifically I want to say to the people of Sudbury, who benefits when workers have a nickel bonus? Who benefits? Who gets the money from that nickel bonus? It's every small business in the community of Sudbury and in the region.

Those workers, through the United Steelworkers, went and negotiated a nickel bonus at the table when times were weak, when the company wasn't making money, and the union said, "Listen, we understand you're having a tough time and we want to help Inco" at the time "to survive and become a stronger company. So rather than negotiating wages, we're going to take what's called a nickel bonus. If the price of nickel goes up, we make money. If the price of nickel goes down, we make no money." That way, the profit was tied to the wages of the workers.

What an innovative idea from the Steelworkers. They didn't say, "Give me 5%" or "Give me 4% per year," or "Give me 3% per year." They said, "We get it. We're Steelworkers. We understand. We need to have a strong company that makes money." The Steelworkers made an agreement with that company that said that when the company makes money, the workers make money.

So along comes Vale Inco, another multinational. They walk into Sudbury and they say, "We're going to turn NAN on its ear and we're going to take away the benefit that the workers have negotiated that says, 'When Inco makes money, the workers make money.'" And what does this McGuinty government do? Nothing. The sound of the crickets is going again.

The government had an opportunity to get involved in this and say, "Don't come into Ontario and expect that you're going to turn this thing on its ear. You have a responsibility as a corporation in the city of Sudbury to make sure you run a profitable organization, but that those profits are shared with the workers and they're shared with the community of Sudbury and area."

Shame on the McGuinty government for their Open Ontario policy that says, "We're going to allow the Vale Incos of this world to come in, and allow them to gut the collective agreement by taking away the defined pension plan that workers have fought for in the city of Sudbury for years and take away the nickel bonus workers have fought for."

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I say again, you know what? The nickel bonus—I've heard some people in city of Sudbury and others say, "Oh, those workers were getting too much money with the nickel bonus." But how many years did they go without increases because the company wasn't making money, number one. Number two, when the workers were making money on the nickel bonus, where did they spend that money? They spent it at the car dealership. They spent it at the Quiznos. They spent it at the clothing store. They spent it at the building supply store. They spent their money in the community; the profits that came from the ground in Sudbury as a result of the mining at Inco were spent back into the community. What a novel idea. And this government says that we're open for business? Oh, yeah, let the multinational walk in and do what they want.

Now the government says, "Oh, don't worry. Everybody should be happy in northern Ontario. We've got the Ring of Fire."

Mr. Paul Miller: Ring of what?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The Ring of Fire—and I'm not talking about what happens at times. I'm talking about the Ring of Fire in my riding, which is in northeastern Ontario, north of Marten Falls, south of Peawanuck, west of Attawapiskat and east of Sandy Lake. There's an area where there's huge mineral potential for chromite, copper and other metals that are abundant in that particular area.

The government is saying that our future in the north—even though Xstrata shut down their smelter refinery and moved to Quebec, and even though we allowed Vale Inco to gut the collective agreement and take money out of the community of Sudbury by way of money they're picking out of the pockets of workers—they're saying that our saving is going to be the Ring of Fire. Well, my God.

What a saving we have in northern Ontario. We have yet to develop good policy when it comes to resource policy in this province that says, number one, if you're going to mine in Ontario, you're going to process that ore in Ontario. The companies involved in the Ring of Fire and Xstrata said it directly to the Premier at the cabinet table, as I sat there with the minister of mines, as I sat there with the heads of Inco, with Mayor Tom Laughren, with the coalition and the Premier of Ontario. They said that there will be no processing of ore in Ontario. It's all being shipped out of this province. So you say to yourself, why would you allow natural resources in this province to be extracted if we in Ontario are not going to benefit from those natural resources? Open for business? Open Ontario? You're talking about the raping and pillaging of our economy.

In northern Ontario, we've only got really one big thing going for us. It's not Rick Bartolucci, I can tell you that right now. It's not Dalton McGuinty. It's the natural resources that we're lucky to have. If we can't add value to the natural resources in this province, my friends, there is not a heck of a lot left, because everything else that derives from northern Ontario comes out of the natural resources industry.

I say to my friends on the other side—and I want to say this with all due respect, because I have great respect for any member who has the fortitude, strength and willingness to run in a general election and be elected under whatever banner. We're all honourable members, and I don't try to say in this House that you're bad people because you're doing what you're doing. All I'm saying is, you don't get it. You need to understand that what the people want from their government is a government that stands up for them, a government that says Ontario is first and will always be because the government of Ontario will make sure that in the end we do what is right for this particular province. So I say to my friends across the way: Open Ontario?

The latest is—and I did a question here in the House today. The government probably thinks it's not a very big thing. My good friend Peter Shurman would understand that, as a good Conservative, a good business person. We had a system in this province for years where school bus operators would go negotiate with the school boards for the contracts to pick up the kids across the province. Who does that process favour? Locally grown businesses, mom-and-pops that go out and buy one bus, and then they make it two, they make it five, they make it 10, and eventually they become the Ron Malettes of this world and others, who operate businesses in our community where they buy buses, which means to say that they're buying equipment mostly built in Ontario, they're hiring people in our communities—they've got mechanics and drivers—and they spend the money that they get from the benefit of those contracts in their local communities. I'll tell you, what a good idea.

But this government has said, "We're going to turn that on its ear. We're going to change the process in this province to one where we're going to have a request for proposals, where anyone can bid on any contract."

You know what? On the surface, that sounds quite democratic. It sounds like—oh my God—it might even make sense. But who has the ability to bid on these RFPs? Is it the mom-and-pop operation that operates one or two buses? They don't have the capacity to bid on RFPs, so who, in the end, is going to get all these contracts? We already know, because if you take a look at what has happened in places where they ran the pilot project with the RFPs, 90% of the bus routes have gone to the large bus companies that are not even owned by Canadian people; they're companies run out of the States and England. I don't have a problem with foreign nationals coming in and investing in Ontario, but I want some rules. I want to make sure that in the end, there's going to be some benefit for the people of Ontario.

In this particular policy, what are they doing? They're saying to family-owned businesses that have operated in this province for the last 20 or 50 years, "Too bad, so sad, you're gone. If you're not able to compete with the Laidlaws and the larger companies of this world, too bad. You're gone."

What is the job of government? Is the job of government to look out for the big guy all the time? I think the job of government is to allow the small guy to have a chance to say, "One day, I too will share in the benefit of the economy of Ontario."

I say to the government across the way: Open for business? Who's opening what to whom?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: We're open for business—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh my God. Sandra Pupatello, you're back from some junket.

Excuse me, Speaker. I want to apologize. I want to withdraw that, because that was really uncalled for. The exuberance of being here at 10:07 at night is overtaking me. I've got to say to the minister across the way, I'm not going to say for one second that we should not have a minister of international trade and I'm not going to say for a second that that minister shouldn't travel to other countries to do business, and I'm not going to say for a second that we shouldn't be looking for foreign investment. But I want conditions. I want to know that when people like Samsung come and invest in Ontario, it's going to be to the benefit of locally owned businesses who are trying to make a good profit as a result of hard work in this province.

I look at the FIT program through the Ministry of Energy that went through the whole process of giving out electricity contracts as a result of green energy. Is green energy a good idea? Absolutely; I think it's a great idea. Nobody in this House disagrees. But who are the ones benefiting through the FIT contract? Is it the locally owned companies that are winning on the FIT contracts?

I've got organizations—and the minister knows it—that have tried to start projects in their communities and they're being frozen out by the large multinationals because the process is set to give the large multinationals a hand up, and a hand down to locally owned businesses.

Has the program not given any business to locally owned businesses? Absolutely not. Some has gone to them. To Minister Duguid, who's responsible: There are some contracts with First Nations and others that I'm willing to admit have benefited local communities. I'm not going to say it's completely void, but look at the percentage: The vast majority of projects under FIT have been given to whom? Not First Nations, not locally owned businesses, not even Ontario-owned businesses, for the most part. They're foreign multinationals.

Again, I want to say to the minister of international trade: Should we block investment? Absolutely not. But I want to have a level playing field where a business that operates in Ontario is able to compete with the multinational in a way that they can benefit too. It shouldn't be about the multinational being the only one who gets the benefit and the local entrepreneurs who get frozen out.

Our job in this Legislature is to assist the local entrepreneur. Our job is to help Ontarians dream the dream that one day they too can find their way through this economy and make a profit, get rich and build a stronger economy for Ontario, a better life for them and their family and the people who work for them. Who better to do it but this Legislature and the Ontario government? So I say to my friends—

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: It's not "I have a dream"; it's "I have a nightmare." I am an NDPer.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I've got Rick Bartolucci, who's now a New Democrat. My God, the world is coming to an end. My God, I moved a few people. Sometimes it's amazing what happens in debate.

I know, Madam Speaker, I've got about two minutes; one minute, I'm being told, and people are counting it down. I want to say to you, be aware of what you are doing. We need to ensure that at the end of this process Ontario comes out on top and the people in the province are the ones who benefit from the economic opportunities existing within this province. Are there opportunities? Absolutely yes. Can people build and dream for a better economy? Absolutely yes. But I want those people to be Ontarians, as much as possible, who benefit in this economy. I want this Legislature and this government to do the things that need to be done to encourage, to support, and do the things that need to be done so that people in this province can dream a better dream of tomorrow and build what needs to be built as a strong economy that as much as humanly possible is driven by Ontarians, is owned by Ontarians and is profited from by Ontarians, so that we, at the end of the day, can build a better province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The time has expired.

Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 28. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government motion number 28, time allocation on Bill 68, be deferred."

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We have no further business, Madam Speaker. I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Smith has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until 9 of the clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 2212.

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Mercredi 2 juin 2010

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Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 June 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 juin 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Buddhist prayer.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' EXPENDITURES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the individual members' expenditures for the fiscal year 2009-10, and they are in the members' desks.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 18, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les organisations sans but lucratif.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 1, 2010, I am now required to put the question.

On May 17, 2010, Ms. Aggelonitis moved second reading of Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

RETIREMENT HOMES ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES MAISONS DE RETRAITE

Mr. Phillips moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes / Projet de loi 21, Loi réglementant les maisons de retraite.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Brampton West.

I'm honoured to participate in this debate on Bill 21. It's a bill that for the first time in the history of this province will regulate retirement homes. We estimate there are roughly 700 retirement homes in the province of Ontario. There are 40,000 residents in those retirement homes, the vast majority being seniors. For the first time, Ontario will regulate those.

Bill 21 is a sound piece of legislation that provides important protections for the residents of those homes. The proposed Retirement Homes Act respects the need for independence and respects the need for those residents to make informed decisions. If passed, the Retirement Homes Act would importantly create a regulatory authority. It would have strong powers to license retirement homes, conduct inspections, investigate and do other enforcement activities and, if need be, issue monetary penalties or revoke the licence.

We also will establish mandatory care and safety standards, which has been a subject of some debate. We will require the homes to have emergency plans, infection control and prevention programs, assessment of care needs and care planning, police background checks, safety standards and training for staff.

The third key segment of this is that it will enshrine the residents' rights to many things, including the right to know the true cost of care and accommodation, the right to register complaints, the right to have those complaints dealt with, and the right to live in an environment that promotes zero tolerance of abuse or neglect.

I think every single member of the Legislature has a significant number of retirement homes in their riding. We all know they provide a variety of care, and there are a variety of sizes. This bill is about making sure that those retirement homes provide a safe and secure environment for our seniors.

This bill is a result of four years of hard work by many, many people. It was in 2006 that we, the government, made a commitment to regulate retirement homes and started the process for consultations. I've heard some say that we're rushing this; in my opinion, it's been a pretty orderly process over a four-year period.

In early 2007, we conducted consultations in 12 different communities across the province, and many members of the Legislature participated—

Interjection: I remember that.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: —including my colleague beside me here. We talked with well over 800 groups and

individuals: seniors, their families, consumer advocates, municipalities, seniors' organizations, community service providers and retirement home providers. We also received over 200 written submissions. We heard feedback on a number of issues: how retirement homes should be defined, what regulations should cover and who should be responsible for enforcing the regulations.

The summary of those consultations has been on our website now for, I think, close to three years, so that information has been publicly available. What did the participants say? First, almost all groups we spoke to agreed that a third party regulatory authority was the best way to enforce the standards. Secondly, most groups told us that there should be standards for whatever care is provided in a retirement home: food preparation, staff training and safety, including the building property. Finally, the groups gave us their perspective on the definition of a retirement home.

Following those consultations, our staff set to work on analyzing the recommendations. You can imagine that preparing a piece of legislation that encompasses a pretty diverse set of circumstances out there is not particularly easy. We had many ministries involved, and I want to just pay tribute to a couple of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker: Jim Bradley—if you don't mind me mentioning their names; I should be saying their ridings—and Aileen Carroll, who were both ministers responsible for seniors and did a lot of the heavy lifting that I now am able to bring to conclusion. We also worked, obviously, with a lot of our partners: seniors' advocates, seniors' groups and others, and I want to thank all of them who participated in that.

We then prepared the legislation. It was introduced in the Legislature here in March, and we began the appropriate process then for debating it. We also briefed many of our stakeholders on the content of the legislation. Then we began the debate at what we call here second reading, as you know, Mr. Speaker. There was a good debate here in the Legislature, and the Legislature then voted on second reading, without objection from anyone. It went to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

0910

I'm going through this because it's helpful, I think, for the public to understand that this has been a pretty thorough process.

The committee, of course, orders its own business and established the rules for input. They advertised in, I think, six, seven or eight newspapers across the province from Huntsville to Niagara Falls. The committee heard from 22 presenters at public hearings a couple of weeks ago and reviewed more than 20 written submissions.

Following the public hearings, the committee had clause-by-clause debate, and there were 15 amendments that were adopted as a result of that debate, including some amendments that were raised by the opposition.

I just want to comment on a couple of areas that have had some debate publicly. One is on the regulatory authority. There are some who have mistakenly called it a self-regulating body. It is not a self-regulating body; it's the regulatory authority. It will not be, and it cannot be, dominated by the industry. That's a concern that has been raised, and I want to provide assurance to the public that that's not the case.

This regulatory agency will, as I said earlier, license retirement homes, conduct inspections and investigations, require the retirement homes to meet the prescribed care and prescribed safety standards, will make sure that the residents are informed of their rights and make sure that if they have a complaint, the complaint is heard properly. There is an appeal mechanism if the person is not satisfied about that complaint.

Just to provide, further assurance to the public of the fact that this will not be an industry-dominated board, there will be an interim board initially established to get it rolling. That will have five members. All five members will be appointed by the government. Once the board is up and running, there will be nine members. Four of them will be appointed by the government, including the chair. The other five must follow a series of things, including—the board must develop a bylaw for how they are going to appoint these delegates. They must follow a code of ethics for every director and employer. There is an officer, called the risk officer, who must report publicly, annually, on how well the authority is carrying out its legislated mandate. The authority has the legislated mandate to represent the interest of the residents, making sure that the care standards, the safety standards and the residents' rights are properly, adequately and completely looked after.

I wanted to review that because, as I say, there have been some who have expressed concern that this would be a self-regulatory body and would be dominated by the industry. I just want to assure the Legislature and importantly the public that that is not the case.

There's also been a good deal of debate around what's called the care standards and the safety standards. Again, I want to provide some comfort to those who have raised concerns about it in this respect. If the legislation is passed, which we hope will occur, we then begin work very quickly on the development of those care and those safety standards, including fire safety and public health. I want to assure the interested parties out there that we will be working with them and consulting with them to address the concerns they may have about the bill.

I'm about ready to turn it over to my parliamentary assistant. I've now been the minister for four months. I happen to have landed in this job at a very good time as we are, for the first time in the history of the province, going to, if passed, regulate, license and oversee retirement homes—very important.

There have been concerns raised, as you might expect when you have something as diverse as 700 retirement homes of a variety of sizes and offering a variety of care. I've listened carefully to the concerns that have been raised. I'm satisfied that the legislation allows us to address those concerns. Concerns about the regulatory authority: I've talked at length about that, but I think we can provide assurances that this will be a board that will

represent the interests of the residents. Concern about the care and the safety standards: They will be developed and we will have ample opportunity for input into them. The concern about this being rushed: I actually think it's been quite a long—I don't think; it has been. We're now more than four years from when we announced that we would be dealing with legislation on this; consultations right across the province; broad, broad discussions, particularly by our staff; introduction of a bill here; a good debate in the Legislature; public hearings. Everybody who wanted to be heard at public hearings was heard—everybody.

I actually do appreciate the comments by those who have concerns about the bill, because I think it has helped. We have clarified some parts of the bill. But in total I'm very satisfied that this bill provides the appropriate protections for the residents and it's a major step forward in providing quality of life for the people of Ontario. With that, I turn it over to my parliamentary assistant.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Gerry's parliamentary assistant.

Mr. John O'Toole: Yes, I would like the honour to have Gerry as my parliamentary assistant—he's a very capable individual—at some point in the future. He's just the type of person who is flexible enough to make the right decision.

But on this bill, this is the one time I have a serious disagreement with his interpretation of Bill 21. When I say that, I say that respectfully, because on this side we know that the needs of the aging population in Ontario are great. We're hearing from them on the cost of their electricity bills. We're hearing from them their concerns about property taxes. We're hearing their concerns about the demise of health care in Ontario. We're seeing it in the lack of access to long-term care in Ontario. There's just simply no respect for seniors, it seems. Everything that they've done to make this province and this country great is being taken away from them because they're not part of the vision of Premier McGuinty. In fact, I think they're victims of Premier McGuinty's plan. I don't say that with malice; I say it as, the reality is that they are being left behind.

We see it in the attack on the pharmacists. We see it there, where there's going to be less access to health care, whether it's the emergency room in Peterborough, the one at Northumberland Hills, and I am surprised the member from Peterborough, Jeff Leal, and Lou Rinaldi aren't standing on our side with us, in solidarity, to defend against the destruction of the hospital system in Ontario. Coroner's reports have mentioned it as well down in the Niagara region, the implications for those decisions. It comes right down to our problem with Bill 21.

I want to make it very clear: Our critic, Mr. Martiniuk, and our former health minister, Elizabeth Witmer, see some value in regulating retirement homes. Now, let's put it on the table here. Retirement homes, for those viewers listening today or reading Hansard in the future, are not long-term-care facilities. Each bed in long-term-care facilities in Ontario is funded to some extent by the province of Ontario, probably between $15,000 and $20,000 per bed. We know we have an aging population. We also know that one of the problems in our hospitals are the alternative-level-of-care beds; that's the long-term-care, complex, continuing care beds in hospitals. We know they're in hospitals where there are all sorts of antibiotic-resistant viruses and things potentially out there to risk these vulnerable seniors, but there's no place to put them. They haven't built any long-term-care beds. They're refusing to fund any of the long-term-care beds.

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So what Bill 21 does surreptitiously is this: It's acting like they're going to regulate something that they haven't got five cents invested in. Premier McGuinty and Mr. Phillips do not have five cents invested in retirement homes, and now they are going to tell these retirement homes some rules. The rules are fine. Where are the resources? The resources are only there in the extent of the law, and I suspect more inspectors. I think they should own up to it and say that the extension of long-term care is our ultimate goal.

I know first-hand about this because I'm dealing just now with my wife's mother. I'm going to give you an example. In long-term care what it would cost her is this: They would take her old age security—she's 85 years of age—and they would take their CPP portion. To that, they would add, if you had a private room, about $800 a month that you would have to pay out of your own money, and any other personals like grooming, cable television or phone, and it might cost you an additional $1,000 a month possibly. You take your CPP; it's about $900. So it could cost $2,000 a month, and the provincial government funds the rest of it.

The argument by the NDP and others is the hours of care in long-term care. How much care is actually provided? It does probably cost $40,000 or $50,000 a year for each bed in long-term care, part of it funded directly by the province and partially funded by the individual.

Now, if you're in long-term care and you are destitute—all you have is CPP or OAS—then you won't be in a private room. The new standard is a shared suite with its own washroom, but there will be two people in the room.

In my mother-in-law's case, under the discharge plan from her physician she's not in long-term care, but she's unable, because of lapses in memory and energy levels—I guess looking at retirement homes. She's looking at two or three here in Toronto. Bayview Village is one, and she's looking at one in Peterborough. We've actually visited it. It's quite nice—Canterbury Gardens.

Here's what it costs: The suites basically start at $5,000 a month. If you want a double room, like two bedrooms with a balcony, it's about $7,000 a month. Let's do the math: $7,000 a month. There's no provincial

money in it. Yes, there should be standards on that part. Our critics and our former health minister are fully supportive of having standards and working through the standards, whether it's in the care section, the meals section or the responsibilities of hygiene, maintenance, cleanliness or whatever. But when you are paying $5,000 a month, that's $60,000 a year. If someone in their 80s is on a fixed income with a modest pension—their pension wouldn't be any more than probably $25,000 or $30,000 a year. Because of the inflationary influence from 65 to 85, over 20 years, they'll be lucky if their pension was $25,000, if they had one.

But the real issue is that the premium rooms are in the $6,000-to-$7,000 range. That's $84,000. If you're living out of your RRSPs or a RRIF of some sort of collapsed investment fund, for every $50,000 you want, you have to take about $100,000 out of the fund. So if you're 85 and you're going to live to be 95, you better have $1 million in your RRSP or your RRIF fund, because it'll take $100,000 a year to produce $50,000, so you'd need $1 million to last 10 years. Is there any Premier McGuinty money or Dwight Duncan money? No, there's not one cent. They're ignoring the plight of seniors and the backlog in demand for home supports.

We know the Minister of Health talks often about the aging at home strategy. What is the aging at home strategy? We call it the aging alone strategy; that's what we call it. The aging at home strategy is the CCACs, community care access centres, working with the discharging physician to assign home supports for persons being discharged from hospitals. I think the maximum amount of home supports you can get is about three hours per day. If someone is incontinent or cannot feed themselves or is on very complex medication—it could be somebody who's diabetic or on dialysis—there are all sorts of things that could need support. It's going to be downloaded to the family. That's who's doing it.

So they've admitted two things: Aging at home means staying at home. It also means they're not doing one thing for long-term care. It further means that this Bill 21 is a public admission that they're going to allow you to pay for your own care. That's two-tiered health care by any definition or disguise. The question then becomes, any of the services that you pay for, whether it's physio other treatments—you'll be paying the HST, 8% more, for physio or for hygienic care or any other personal care that you get. In a retirement home, you would be paying for that yourself. If you need private duty nursing, you'll be paying probably $100 an hour, and on that you'll be paying 8% HST on private duty nursing in a retirement home.

I see the Minister of Revenue there, shaking his head, which would mean he understands, probably with some stress, that indeed all the seniors in his riding are going to be paying 8% more for everything, because the heat in those retirement homes is going to be 8% more. The maintenance, snow removal, grass cutting, hall cleaning, food preparation or other kinds of services will all be payroll-taxed and there will be HST on it. So somebody who's paying $5,000 a month now—and that would be a modest one, by the way; it's up to $7,000 or $8,000, and some are $10,000—I just can't believe it. They seem to be ignoring the plight of seniors completely, and it's discouraging.

If I look at the bill itself, it does a couple of things, as I said before, that are important; that is, there is some accountability and some transparency in the process.

If I look here at part V of the bill, it "allows the registrar to appoint inspectors who have certain powers to enter and inspect a retirement home both without a warrant and with a warrant...." There you have it again: the warrantless entry provision. I suspect that the registrar—that's a new level of bureaucracy that I can see, another person who will be on the sunshine list, the $100,000-plus a year. It's quite discouraging.

The registrar—I'm reading from part V: "Upon receiving a complaint about an alleged contravention of a requirement under this act with respect to a retirement home, the registrar"—this is their new, non-medical bureaucrat—"is required to review the complaint"—he'll probably have a bit of staff, investigators and complaint-takers—"and can exercise certain powers, including having an inspection done of the home." There will be a charge laid, for sure. You can count on it; there will be a charge laid. "A complainant can require the complaints review officer to review the complaint if the registrar, after considering the complaint, decides to take no further action."

Another one: "Independently of receiving a complaint"—this is without a complaint—"if the registrar believes on reasonable grounds that a licensee has contravened a requirement under the act, the registrar has the power to make certain orders, such as an order to require the licensee to do something"—fix something or change something—"to refrain from doing something or to pay an administrative penalty"—here we are, a little tax or a fine—"or an order to revoke the licensee's licence."

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They're going to put a framework around here, have a new bureaucracy in the long-term-care section. They won't have five cents of public money to help seniors age in grace.

It goes on to say, "It is an offence to contravene a number of provisions of the act or a provision of the regulations made under the act that the regulations prescribe for that purpose."

Here's part VI: It "deals with the right to appeal certain decisions or orders of the registrar to the Licence Appeal Tribunal and subsequently in certain circumstances to the Divisional Court."

So they're in court now, and that's more money that will be paid by the consumer at the end of the day. There's no provincial money. We've got lawyers into it now investigating or fighting or appealing these complaints.

"Part VII deals with general matters, including the following:

"1. The requirement of the registrar to maintain registers of information.

"2. The obligation of licensees to provide information to the registrar"—more red tape; that's what I see.

"3. Restrictions on the disclosure of personal information or personal health information by the licensee of a retirement home."

This bill, on its exterior for the general public, sounds quite acceptable, quite in order—regulating retirement homes. There are more of them growing. Some of them are corporately organized and have several. They operate under a charter kind of atmosphere. They often have residents' committees that consult. Customer service is a big issue in the newer ones, certainly. As I said, I myself have inspected from the point of view of a consumer, not with any requirements. I suppose they'll have to train these inspectors.

I would say also that the issues here are more complicated, because if the province was to give seniors tax credits for care that they're purchasing, that might have some value to it. I don't see those sort of inventive approaches to this bill. I ask Mr. Phillips, who's certainly a very worthy finance critic—some would argue he should have been the finance minister, but that's another debate. I suspect he's happy with the one cabinet position he has. But here's the point: He can see that seniors' incomes are not going to keep up with these pressures, because in this environment of private long-term care—really, what they're doing here is privatizing long-term care. Let's be honest about it.

With the aging at home strategy, we were told by the CCACs—most MPPs have been briefed—the money was cut from the LHINs: 15% was cut from the CCACs, 15% of the funding. That's cutting services directly to seniors. Someone who has personal hygiene issues where they must be, in the morning, toileted and bathed and prepared and, in the evening, probably the same—washed and put to bed properly—I think it's tragic, and now they're going to be paying more for that. They're going to be paying. This is what happens if you're not getting support from the CCACs. They're telling us that patients are being told, "You're no longer entitled." For instance, people who are on dialysis three times a week in a hospital or being dialysed at home, who have no one there and need someone to hook them up and monitor what's actually going on, are no longer going to get the amount of care they need.

So that's all part of Bill 21. Let's not be fooled by the rhetoric, if you will, by Mr. Phillips, the member from Agincourt—I should get that properly here, to be honest; it's Scarborough–Agincourt—a respectable member, who is telling you that he's supporting the bill in the hope that it'll become law. It'll become law because they're the government. They're ramming this stuff through in the last few days, in the last few hours of this session of the Legislature, and to me, it is a very serious disappointment.

Our member from Cambridge and the member from Kitchener–Waterloo are perplexed by this bill. On the content of the idea, we're in support of regulating retirement homes that may not be regulated today, working with the industry to make sure that that's done in a seamless way so that they can report what's necessary and have annual inspections.

I would say that the long-term-care facilities themselves today have inspections, unannounced, and they have an index of waiting—the care level that's required and the average care level that's required. It used to be called the case mix index. It has another acronym now, but it's roughly the same thing: determining how much is paid by the province to the long-term-care facilities. But, again, there's not one nickel of support in this for seniors in retirement homes, and that's an admission that the government is moving ahead with a plan that provides less for seniors, and it's going to cost them more. It fits very well with what I call "taxing seniors out of their homes."

I'm surprised there aren't some tax measures in here that would be much more harmonious with us. I've looked under the Income Tax Act; there is a topic under line 315, the caregiver amount. I would ask the provincial government to look at those provisions under line 315. They can claim caregiver amounts, which I think would make this a much more digestible piece of legislation.

You cannot be ignoring the fact that the seniors in this province are not being respected. It's quite frankly the truth. It's an admission here that they're doing nothing for long-term care and nothing for the hospitals in terms of providing solutions to—respite services, at least, for complex continuing-care patients in hospitals.

I would say that the proposed Retirement Homes Act that we're debating this morning, which was introduced on March 30 and debated on second reading on April 13—today, we'll probably be hearing the last of it.

I would only encourage one thing: that it should go for public hearings. If I had that admission, I think there would be general support that we would still have hope that they can turn this thing around and have some time for seniors who could be suffering and aging in their own home, who need to be in a place where there's some care provided—a modest amount at the beginning, but as they age perhaps they'll need more care.

You have to do something for long-term care in this province. Please admit that and work with the industry, and I'm sure that we will have much happier seniors and a much happier opposition.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: I must say, I'm quite disappointed in the refusal of this government to come clean on this bill. The minister repeats the same mantra every time he's questioned about the bill's failings. He doesn't seem to want to hear from many of the professionals who have solid advice to give. It seems that his mind is made up and that he doesn't want to be confused by the facts.

Well, Minister, the fact is that this is an extremely flawed piece of legislation. It is geared to self-regulation of what should be a completely Ontario-owned and -operated industry. But offshore multinational corporations are the winners in this. They get to decide what happens to our

most vulnerable citizens, and this government is aiding and abetting this travesty. This is patently clear to me in your refusal to listen to and act upon the advice of so many firefighting professionals.

You won't even offer up a partial solution in ensuring that our seniors in every Ontario retirement home have equal fire sprinkler protection. You simply ignore these seniors living in older retirement homes. Why won't you think of their safety? Are these multinational corporations so important to you? The hard-earned money that these seniors pay to live in these older places should be spent on their safety, not on excessive profits for the homes' owners. This is absolutely scandalous, and you should be completely ashamed of your obvious lack of concern for seniors, especially during Seniors' Month in Ontario.

I'll read to you from a letter I received this morning, Minister. "It is my understanding that Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes, will be tabled for third reading this week before the Legislature adjourns for its summer recess. I strongly urge you to defeat Bill 21.

"It is alarming that of the 92 amendments brought forward by the NDP, only one amendment was adopted," and it was a housekeeping amendment. "Bill 21 allows private retirement homes the ability to provide medical and nursing care similar to long-term-care homes and public hospitals. If adopted, the legislation will allow for these homes to become long-term-care facilities, with minimal regulations.

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"Bill 21 creates a second tier of lesser-regulated long-term-care facilities in Ontario because the homes, which are largely owned by large, multinational firms, will be allowed to self-regulate. Our elderly people deserve nothing less than the finest care we are able to provide, but Bill 21 puts corporate profits ahead of quality of life.

"I strongly urge you to vote against" this bill.

In this Legislature, in committee and wherever I've asked, I've expressed my concerns about Bill 21 and its complete silence on the issue of mandatory sprinkler systems in all Ontario retirement homes. Mine has not been the only voice on this issue. The Fire Fighters Association of Ontario, the fire chiefs of Ontario, the Ontario fire marshal's office, the coroner's office and many, many articles in newspapers have spoken on these problems.

The Minister of Community Safety, in response to my question, quoted from a single source to support the government's not requiring sprinkler systems in all retirement homes. But, by selecting one small quotation, he did not put the position fully into perspective, rather leading one to believe wrongly. That letter from the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario also mentioned that they were on record as supporting mandatory sprinklers in all residential buildings. That would include, Minister, retirement homes.

We have retold the stories of several retirement home fires. We have tried to get through to the government that the cost of rebuilding a burnt-out retirement home is far greater than the cost of installing the proper sprinkler systems. One example: the fire in Mississauga. Total damage: $8.2 million. The cost of a sprinkler system for that facility would have been $43,000—a drop in the bucket for protection. People died, Minister.

The real cost is the loss of life, the permanent damage to the elderly and their families. It is beyond all comprehension that this government is taking the position that it is, that it's turning its back on seniors' safety. This is shocking enough on its own, but tomorrow starts Seniors' Month in Ontario, and this government will be celebrating by leaving our vulnerable retirement home residents even more vulnerable.

Can the lobby of the retirement home industry really be stronger than basic, common decency, than the reality of what will happen when the next older retirement home goes up in flames and loss of life? Will this government be held responsible because they had the opportunity to change it? Will there be liable actions? I think so.

I will put on the record the letter sent to all MPPs from Tim Beckett, the president of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. Here is the letter:

"To all members of provincial Parliament

"Re: Bill 21....

"It is of extreme disappointment that we find Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes, has passed through committee without a vital amendment that was to include mandatory automatic sprinkler retrofit for those retirement homes that do not currently have them installed.

"This bill in its true meaning is intended to protect seniors in a place they are to feel the safest: in their home. It, however, falls measurably short of doing that and leaves our most vulnerable population vulnerable.

"Between 2008 and 2009, Ontario has witnessed three catastrophic fires in retirement homes. There was the Rowanwood retirement home in Huntsville that caused over $8 million in damage; luckily, no one lost their life thanks to two off-duty police officers that were able to alert the residents, and all 56 seniors escaped.

"A month later in Niagara Falls, the Cavendish Manor retirement home saw a fire that resulted in 11 seniors being transported to hospital, three in critical condition.

"Six months after this tragedy, the Muskoka Heights retirement home in Orillia had a fire that resulted in four seniors dead and three permanently brain-damaged. All this occurred in the last 18 months.

"This province has witnessed two of the largest retirement home fires in the history of North America. In 1980, 25 seniors died at Extendicare in Mississauga and in 1995, eight died in the Meadowcroft, also in Mississauga.

"Three other seniors died in the veterans' wing of Sunnybrook hospital. These three fires that resulted in the deaths of 36 seniors dying had three separate independent coroner's inquests all calling for the retroactive installation of sprinklers in retirement homes and long-term-care homes. Sprinklers save lives! The National Fire Protection Association ... reports that there have been no"—I

repeat, no—"multi-fatality fire deaths in retirement homes that are protected by sprinklers.

"This is an opportunity for the members of provincial Parliament to make a big difference in the safety and protection of seniors. Using the words of Premier McGuinty when speaking on the HST, 'It may not be a popular decision but it is the right decision.'

"This too may not be a popular decision, but it is the right decision to make for the protection of our seniors.

"Until retrofit sprinklers for retirement homes constructed prior to 1997 are introduced in the Ontario fire code, more of our seniors will be injured or die. This tragedy is preventable.

"Members of provincial Parliament have the duty to protect these seniors and should vote against Bill 21 until sprinklers are included.

"The OAFC continues to recommend public fire and life safety improvements at all levels of government. Our advice is given motivated solely by protecting Ontarians from the devastation that fire causes, and for the sake of Ontario's population of all ages, it is now time for this government to take heed, listen and make the right decision.

"The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs is available to provide any assistance to any member on this issue.

"Sincerely,

"Fire Chief Tim Beckett,

"President,

"Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs."

On behalf of all Ontario seniors and their families, I implore this government to wake up, to stand up, to finally put the safety of all Ontarian seniors before any industry lobby, and implement mandatory sprinkler systems now.

I'm going to share the rest of the time with the member from Nickel Belt to talk about the health aspect of this also.

This is a terrible bill. The minister stands up and says how wonderful it is. I can tell you, the NDP will not support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: It's an honour to speak in support of this proposed Retirement Homes Act.

I want to thank Minister Phillips for explaining the journey this bill has taken in the last four years. The minister also did an excellent job of outlining the many provisions of the bill that deal with accountability, transparency and appropriate government oversight of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority.

I want to echo my colleague's appreciation of the feedback we've received from various partners, including seniors, community groups, businesses and government colleagues, on this bill.

This proposed act will improve the lives of approximately 40,000 seniors living in retirement homes today, and that number is expected to increase significantly as our senior population doubles in the next 20 years.

For the first time in Ontario, we're providing legislative protections for seniors in retirement homes. We have a collective responsibility to ensure that the care services that retirement home residents are currently able to receive are delivered in a safe, transparent manner.

Our government will continue to work closely with seniors, retirement home operators and various community and health organizations to develop comprehensive, flexible regulations, including care and safety standards, that all homes will be required to meet in order to be licensed in this province.

We also listened carefully to standing committee presentations a few weeks ago, and have made important amendments to reflect the feedback we heard. In the definition of retirement homes, we have made it clear that our act and regulations will apply to retirement homes and only the retirement home portion of mixed-use facilities. Those parts of mixed-use facilities that are governed or funded under the legislation, such as long-term care, will not be required to comply with the Retirement Homes Act. However, I want to make it clear that they would be required to continue to comply with other applicable acts.

We also received input about the residents' bill of rights that is enshrined in Bill 21. The following rights would include:

—the right to clear information about the contents of a resident's contract with the retirement home, specifically the different types of accommodation and the care services provided in the home and their costs;

—the right to an individualized plan of care based on an assessment of a resident's needs;

—the right to contract with external care providers and apply for publicly funded care services if residents so choose; and

—the right to raise concerns or recommend changes in care or services to the authority or any other person without interference and without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal from the retirement home operator or staff.

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Residents who are not satisfied with the authority's decision would be able to escalate the complaints to a complaints review officer, who has considerable independence from the board of directors. The complaints review officer would review how the complaint was handled and refer the matter back to the registrar for further action, if necessary.

The issue of restraints was raised by many groups during standing committee presentations. We heard from several presenters that our bill needs to be clearer about prohibiting restraints in retirement homes. We have made an amendment to the act to make it absolutely clear that restraints are not to be used, with the exception of common-law duty to restrain a person when there's an imminent harm possible to the person or others.

We have strict criteria for the use of personal assistance services devices, such as temporary supports to help keep a person upright during feeding. These criteria are

not inconsistent with those set out in the Long-Term Care Homes Act. Personal assistance services devices can only be used if they are included in a resident's plan of care. The use of these devices would have to be consented to by the resident or the resident's substitute decision-maker and used according to the manufacturer's instructions. The devices must be recommended by one of the following: a legally qualified medical practitioner; a member of the College of Nurses of Ontario; a member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario; a member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario; and no other person unless government agrees to pass regulations to allow it.

To conclude, I want to say that many groups deserve thanks—seniors' groups, those who advocate on behalf of seniors, health care experts, community groups and, lastly, the retirement home industry—for their work to help bring this legislation to life. We recognize that the feedback provided so far has made our bill that much stronger, and for that, we thank you.

For this first time in this province, we're providing protections in legislation for seniors living in retirement homes. I think we can all agree that this is the right thing to do.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

M^me^ France Gélinas: Since I have been elected, I have asked in this House many times: When will this government bring regulations on retirement homes?

We all agree that retirement homes need to be regulated. There have been far too many tragedies happening to frail, elderly people who are living in retirement homes and who did not get the protection they needed. Terrible stories: stories of starvation, stories of people being detained—that is just incomprehensible in today's Ontario.

So, finally, on March 30, the government brought forward first reading of Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes. It was supposed to be a happy occasion. We had been waiting for this for so long, but quickly we realized that they had lost their way.

We will tell the world, we will tell the people of Ontario, that retirement homes are not regulated by the government. People will feel safe putting their vulnerable, elderly parents and relatives into retirement homes; they will be regulated by the government—but none of that is true. They will not be regulated by the government. They will be regulated by an industry-dominated authority. What this bill really does is it creates an authority, and that authority will regulate retirement homes.

The problem is, that authority will be dominated by for-profit retirement home owners, whose number one goal will be profit, not quality care, not anything else.

We have seen tremendous growth. I'm sure every one of the MPPs in here can name growth in the retirement home business in their riding. Those things are popping up everywhere, and for good reason: The demographics are changing, and people like this type of accommodation.

If you are able to make your own decisions and look after yourself, you don't need this regulation. You were doing well before, and you will continue to do well. But for this critical mass of frail, elderly or disabled people, for that mass of Ontarians who need government protection, we're not going to do this. We're going to pretend that there is protection, but there's not going to be.

The government says, "Oh, we will make sure that we appoint people." I would love to be able to trust them at their word, but what's to say that in three years the same minister is going to be there? Why not put it in writing that it will be government supervision? They're not ready to do this.

We've tried really hard. I've put in 92 amendments to this bill, to try to take this from an industry-dominated authority to a government-supervised, government-controlled, government-informed—heck, any kind of government supervision. They refuse all of this.

They refuse things as simple as, if the retirement home has to provide information to the possible tenant or to the people who live there, I wanted to make sure that this information would be free. They refused. They don't want to get involved with the business model. That means that mandatory information that the government says every retirement home will have to give—well, the retirement home will be allowed to charge for this. What does that mean? That means that some people won't get it. This is mandatory information that every tenant in a retirement home must have. But if you don't pay, you won't get it. What kind of a mandatory requirement is this when the government is so intent on protecting the for-profit model of retirement homes that it forgets its responsibility to the frail elderly of this province? That's one big problem with the bill.

The second, just-as-big problem with the bill is that there is no cap on the amount of care that can be delivered within a retirement home. What does that mean? That means that what we are really setting up is a parallel for-profit system of long-term care.

Let me be clear: In Ontario we have laws for long-term-care homes. Long-term-care homes are things like nursing homes, homes for the aged, charitable homes for the aged, municipal homes for the aged. Those are all called long-term-care homes in Ontario, and they are regulated. We make sure that the quality of care that is delivered is delivered in a way that is regulated by the government, because we know that those are frail, elderly people.

You can have the exact same amount of care, the exact same needs, as a person in a long-term-care home that has all of the government's protection—you can have the exact same thing in a retirement home and have no protection whatsoever, have no regulation of care whatsoever. As long as you have the money to pay, you can buy care that not only should be delivered and paid for by a government-sanctioned agency—a long-term-care

home—but that you would see in a hospital, in a complex, continuing care bed. As long as you have the money to pay, you will be allowed to do this, and there will be this retirement home legislation that will mean absolutely nothing. There will be no standard for the care that you are given. There will be no cap on the amount of care.

Frankly, if you need care, the government should be the one paying for the care. This is the way it works in Ontario. This is the way it works in Canada. It's called medicare. Care is delivered based on your need, not on your ability to pay.

We are throwing medicare out the window and coming in with this act to regulate retirement homes with a parallel fee-for-service model dominated by private industry. If you have the money to pay, you can buy yourself the equivalent of what you would get in a complex continuing-care bed in any one of the 157 hospitals in Ontario. You can buy this in any retirement home that is willing to offer it to you. This is not acceptable to me, to have a piece of legislation that in black and white says, "We can do away with medicare, as long as it is your choice to pay for care." What kind of a choice is that? Haven't we made it clear that medicare is a fundamental value of the people of Ontario, that we want care to be available based on need and not on ability to pay? We go to great lengths to say that this is a Canadian value, this is what defines us, this is what makes us different from our neighbours to the south, the fact that we have medicare. Well, we now have a bill here that says, "If you have the bucks, you can buy yourself care—no questions asked, no regulation."

This is terrible, that a piece of legislation that is about to pass third reading right here, right now in Ontario, in this day and age—we've seen the battle that happened down south. We've seen President Obama trying to bring medicare to the people of the US. Not much luck there, was there? But now we are opening the door. The door has swung wide open to have a parallel system: Buy yourself the care you want, sanctioned by the government under the regulated retirement homes act.

There are a number of other flaws with this bill: the fact that they will have contained units. Think a bit about a cell within a range within a jail. You will be allowed to have those in retirement homes. If the owner of the retirement home decides to have a locked-in unit, they will be allowed to have this and the government won't have any regulation regarding those. This is appalling. This should not be happening in Ontario. If somebody has a level of need that requires seclusion, they should be in a long-term-care home. They should be in complex continuing care. They should not be a tenant in a retirement home. To me, this is like opening up many jails in the retirement homes for people that are difficult. I'm on the select committee for mental health. How many of the mental health patients that the province has let down will find their way into those locked-down units in retirement homes, where we will feed and water you a couple of times of day and that will be the end of you?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 20, 2010, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Phillips has moved third reading of Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Orders of the day?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: No further business, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There being no further business, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1004 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is my pleasure to introduce in the gallery today Andy Soumbos from Curves Fitness Group, who has been with us in this Legislature before. Also, Paul Bailey of the Police Pensioners Association of Ontario, Vic Dybenko from the Police Retirees of Ontario, and Al Olsen, the president of the Police Retirees of Ontario.

I want to thank our retired police officers for all they've done and I want to thank them for their diligence in fighting the HST.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just remind members: The intent is to introduce guests and not to engage in debate during introductions.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my pleasure to introduce Victoria Lavine-Groves and Lottie Lavine, who are the grandmother and mother of one of our wonderful pages, Tristen.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Today is a special day at Queen's Park. I'm delighted to welcome the united counties of Prescott and Russell: Warden Conrad Lamadeleine and the mayors and councillors of the eight municipalities in the most beautiful area of the province. I have to say, when you get the beautiful sun here in Toronto, the sun has risen in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell first.

Mr. Frank Klees: We're joined in the House today by the following representatives of the Ontario Marine Transportation Forum. As you know, they'll be hosting a reception later on this evening and will be meeting with members throughout the day. I'd like to welcome Mr. Tim Heney, Allister Patterson, Wayne Smith, Bruce Hodgson, Bruce Wood, Ray Johnston, Mike Kirkpatrick and Pat Loduca. Welcome to the Legislature today.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'd like to introduce a number of parents of children with autism who are here with us

today, as well as some of their children: Paul Ceretti, Norrah Whitney, Lucas Whitney, Mary Kay Whitney, Maria Bundha, Sebastian Bundha, Debra Campbell, Gail Geller, Lorraine Lajeunesse, Renita Paranjape, Barry Hudson, Susan Fentie, Sandy Senko, as well as a couple of other folks in from Ajax: Kevin Rauer and his sons Dillon and Drew.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Along with the Minister of Health Promotion, Minister Best, I want to welcome Amy Wanounou and Denyse Boxell of Safe Kids Canada to Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature—they're joining us a little later—Tania Lee Hartmann and Peter Brain from the Sarnia–Lambton duty-free stores, Chris Foster from the Queenston-Lewiston duty-free stores, and Abe Taqtaq from the Windsor duty-free stores, who are here to meet with members today.

Hon. Margarett R. Best: It's my pleasure today to welcome our stakeholders, Safe Kids Canada, to the Legislature.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome two interns from the Ministry of Health Promotion, Ms. Kartiga Thavaraj and Ms. Kadijo Afrah. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature. They are in the east members' gallery today.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to extend a special invitation to the Legislature today to my very good friends Wendy Davies and Sylvia Gualtieri, who are here to observe question period, take a tour of this great place and observe how respectful question period can really be. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I just want to introduce Charles and Allison Smith. Charles is my EA, and his wife is here for the first time. I want to congratulate him on his tenure track position in Saskatoon. They're moving; we're losing him. Anyway, I just want to welcome them.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I would like to welcome to the Legislature Tiger Jeet Singh and his sons Tiger Ali Singh and Rob Hans, who are also accompanied by Troy Newton. Tiger Jeet Singh had a great wrestling career which lasted nearly 40 years. Tiger Jeet Singh has recently been honoured in Milton. A public school has been named after him for his family's contribution, and his other activities as well.

His son Tiger Ali Singh has followed in his father's footsteps and has become a very successful wrestler himself, wrestling in the World Wrestling Federation. He is a two-time IWA World Tag Team champion, and is also the winner of the World Wrestling Federation's Kuwait Cup.

I want to welcome them to the Legislature.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I have two interns here from my office: Sean Torrie and Kevin Leung. I'd like to welcome them here today. I don't know where they are, but they're here somewhere.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of the member from York West to welcome the Italian heritage class from St. Simon Catholic school in York West, and Noreen and Samanthi Wi-jay-sin, to the Legislature today.

Also on behalf of the member from York West, I'd like to welcome a 19-member Ghanaian delegation visiting Queen's Park today. Those in attendance include Osahene Kwaku Atekyi, president, Brong-Ahafo, Regional House of Chiefs, Ghana; Nana Abena Boatema Domase, Number One Hemaa; Henry Peprah; Alex Kwaku Anokomoah, chairman of the planning committee; Mr. Thomas Toa, president of the Ontario Brong-Ahafo Cultural Association; Claire Budziak, manager of individual services, human rights advisory services; and Roseanne Reech, manager of corporate services, human rights advisory services.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier: Ontario families look to the summer for mum and dad to get away with the kids for a bit of a break. But in less than a month's time, your greedy HST tax grab is going to take even more money out of the pockets of Ontario families. The Premier will begin taxing kids' camps; he'll be taxing the family vacations. Premier, you're going to make families pay more for gas or transportation to get to their destination, you're going to tax them on the accommodation at the hotel or motel when they arrive, and then you're going to raise the taxes on the arts or cultural events they want to enjoy with the kids this summer. Premier, why are you trying to tax the fun out of Ontario families' summers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's always a pleasure to receive the questions.

I want to begin by thanking the leader of the official opposition for his solemn undertaking and honourable commitment to keep the HST in place. He understands how important it is to families that we have in place a strong economy that creates good jobs and gives us the capacity to support our schools and our health care and our supports for our most vulnerable and protections for the environment.

In my supplementary, I'll talk a little bit about the objective information that is out there which I would recommend to Ontarians when it comes to getting a better understanding of the rationale for the HST and the actual consequences.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Sadly, with each and every passing day, the Premier continues to demonstrate how dramatically out of touch he has become with the lives of hard-working Ontario families and seniors.

Premier, families will now see that your HST will make it more expensive to register their son or daughter for soccer or baseball, it will become more expensive to

rent ice for hockey school, to pay for the ballet lessons, green fees or other recreational activities. Parents now are learning that Dalton McGuinty plans to thrust the HST down on summer camps. One parent wrote to us to say the HST will cost her $84 more to send her son to camp for just one week. Parents of children who have special needs will find that their costs increase even more for camps for special-needs children.

Premier, are camp and summer sports what you had in mind—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

1040

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, my honourable colleague tells us that he's very concerned about these kinds of issues, which I believe lack a foundation in fact, yet he's also committed completely to maintaining the HST once it's in place. I'm not sure how he can have it both ways, and I think Ontario families are entitled to ask some important questions on that.

There are some objective assessments of the HST in our full package of tax reforms, and one of those that I'd recommend to Ontarians is called Not a Tax Grab After All: A Second Look at Ontario's HST. It's put out by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. I'll quote it in part. This paper concludes that the government's HST plan "is virtually revenue-neutral." Generally speaking, no one in Ontario is dramatically better off or worse off as a result.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier is now back to his original spin that this is somehow not a tax grab. I thought you had a moment of cleansing clarity a couple of weeks ago when you admitted that your HST is nothing but another tax grab on the backs of hard-working families and Ontario seniors.

Your tax grab also threatens another mainstay of Ontario summers: agricultural fairs and exhibitions. Agricultural fairs are important not only for the tourism they draw to rural communities but also for the money that they raise to support training for junior farmers and for 4-H. The Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies say that they are volunteer-run and that they have razor-thin budgets. Premier, they cannot afford your HST on everything from the trades who set up the midway to entertainment on the stage.

Premier, won't you admit this is a massive tax grab that will hurt Ontario families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I also want to take the opportunity to thank the Ontario Conservatives for all of their support and encouragement when it comes to moving ahead with this important initiative. I thank Minister Flaherty, former Minister of Finance Ecker, John Baird and Tony Clement. I want to thank former leaders of the party, including John Tory and Mike Harris, as well, for their support for this initiative. I thank Senator Runciman and I thank Prime Minister Harper.

This is an issue that transcends partisan politics. We have all known for a long time that this is a difficult but important step. It's something that, over the long term, will ensure the health of our economy. It will have in place good jobs for our families and our capacity to support good schools and good health care for families, as well.

If it were not for the support of Conservatives in Ontario, we could not move ahead. Again, I want to thank that party.

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Here is the difference between Ontario Conservatives and Dalton McGuinty's Liberals: Premier, you believe that you can continue to increase taxes on the backs of Ontario families. We stand on the other side of the argument, that taxes need to come down for Ontario families to give them a break, to help them spend money in local economies and to create jobs again in the province of Ontario.

Come Canada Day, Premier, you'll also have brides and grooms in your crosshairs for weddings across our province. You're going to increase taxes on hall rentals, on DJs and bands, on photographers, on wedding planners and on decorators. You're even going to increase the cost of a glass of wine or a bottle of beer at the bar at the end of the celebration.

Most people want to give newlyweds a hand up when they start out their lives together. Why are you loading them up with an even bigger—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I tried to catch the ear of a number of ministers, but they were so loud they couldn't hear me. I would encourage them to tone—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I encourage both sides to tone things down.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There's a lot of volume on the part of the leader of the official opposition when it comes to objecting to the implementation of our tax reforms, but he is absolutely silent when it comes to rescinding it. I think families should keep that in mind.

He says he's concerned about some of the costs that our families have to bear. But when we moved ahead with a personal income tax cut for 93% of Ontarians, he voted against that. As we move ahead to reduce drug costs for Ontario families and save them millions of dollars, he's voting against that. When we move ahead with full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds that will save a family thousands of dollars for one child when it comes to daycare costs, again, the leader of the official opposition and his party don't support that.

Again, I'm glad that we have the support of the Conservatives. We look forward to moving this initiative, because it stands to benefit families.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Every bride and groom will see Dalton McGuinty as an unwanted guest at their wedding this summer with his hand in their pockets. Do you know what? When it comes to the honeymoon, Dalton McGuinty is going to be standing there, too, putting a HST on their airfare, hotel and motel rooms, gas for their car as they drive to their destination and anywhere else the couple may stop for that night. If they want to go for a boat trip along the Niagara River, see a play at Stratford or go to a music festival in Toronto, Ottawa or Kingston, Dalton McGuinty is going to be sitting right there next to them, too, taking more money out of their pockets.

Premier, will you please RSVP "no" to your HST tax grab?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order. I will remind you of the message I delivered yesterday: If somebody wants to leave early, I can easily facilitate that.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the creativity that goes into these questions. They're nothing if not entertaining. But I think what Ontarians would look for from time to time is the occasional fact.

If we pursue this particular line, I think one of the things that newlyweds would be looking to is the future and possibly the beginning of a family, wondering what kind of a world they'll be bringing their kids into. I think they want to ensure that we have a strong economy here, where there are good jobs so mom and dad can work, if they choose to do so. They want to make sure we've got the capacity to support good schools for the kids. They want to make sure that we've got the capacity to support good health care for everybody in the family. They want to make sure that we have special supports for people if they become vulnerable. They want to make sure that we protect the quality of our environment.

This plan of tax reforms is all about 600,000 more jobs. That's really important to parents today, and it's important for our kids tomorrow.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, you will tax every young couple at their wedding this summer. You will tax them at their honeymoon. And when they try to buy a home together, Dalton McGuinty's hand will be in their pocket once again. Buying a new home will be hit with the HST. Real estate fees will go up with your HST. Condo fees will go up with your HST. When they see a lawyer, an accountant, a financial adviser; try to exercise at Curves; or sign up the kids for soccer, hockey or ballet down the road, Dalton McGuinty's hand will be in their pocket.

Premier, whether I am in Niagara, Ottawa, Toronto or North Bay, I'm hearing more and more people saying, "Enough is enough." The Ontario PCs will put all options on the table to lower the tax burden for families to help them spend money in the local economy.

Premier, why are you bound and determined to make life so expensive for Ontario families?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Sandra, the Speaker was looking at you.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Speaker is ignoring her.

Interjections.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd be very appreciative if the government members would come to order.

Premier.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to remind my honourable colleague that, as a result of the tax reforms that we're putting forward, we are cutting taxes for people over the course of the next three years by over $11 billion. I think that we can lose sight of that, and that's pretty important.

My honourable colleague has very easy answers for very complicated problems, and one of those that he is going to dangle before Ontarians, it's become quite obvious now, is that he's going to cut their taxes; he says he's going to cut them dramatically. I want to remind Ontarians that, overwhelmingly, the amount of money that we invest through government goes into our public servants through their public services that they deliver. You can't cut taxes without firing nurses, without firing teachers, without firing water inspectors, without firing meat inspectors, without compromising the quality of the public services that we believe families have a right to in this province.

They can stand for reckless tax cuts. We'll stand for quality public—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): To the opposition side: Please don't egg them on.

New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The McGuinty cabinet went on the road yesterday to defend their unfair tax scheme, and as often happens at these HST events, real families were nowhere to be seen.

Will the Premier or his HST team be sitting down with real families in Ontario any time soon?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm really pleased that we are engaging in this conversation and this important debate about a very important public policy initiative. One of the things I would hope that we can convey as members of the government, and I would list my colleagues opposite in this cause, if they might be so inclined, is to explain to Ontarians why it's so important that we do this. I think Ontarians intuitively understand that our world has changed, that there was a recession. They may know that we've lost over 250,000 jobs, and

we need to make some changes ourselves so that we can grow stronger.

When we host the G20 very shortly, each and every one of those countries has an HST equivalent in place; 140 countries have this in place. Soon, six out of 10 provinces will have this in place. Anybody who has done it has never undone it because it works; it makes our businesses stronger; it gives us more money to fund our schools and our hospitals and create good jobs for our families. That's fundamentally what this is all about.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In the gallery today from Ajax are Kevin Rauer and his two children, Dillon and Drew. Kevin is one of a quarter of a million people who have signed the NDP's HST petition. He and his wife, Michelle, work hard to put food on the table for their kids and provide a comfortable home.

Kevin's question is a simple one, and it's a question many, many families are asking: Why is the Premier about to make his life more expensive when he should be concentrating on making his life more affordable?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, it's understandable that families, in particular, can be confused by the conflicting information that's being introduced in the public realm. I understand that. That's why I'd ask them to take a look at some of the objective assessments that have been put forward. The University of Calgary—it's a university that is not even based in this province—is saying that this will create some 600,000 new jobs. I've never met a mother or a father or a grandmother or a grandfather who doesn't want to ensure there are jobs for us today and jobs for our kids tomorrow.

I'd ask families to ask themselves, again: Why is it that food banks support this? Why is it that businesses support this? Why is it that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives supports it? Because it's the right thing to do for our families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The rising cost of child care and commuting have already put the squeeze on the Rauer family budget. The McGuinty HST will add another significant financial burden. An average family with two kids, like the Rauers, is going to be paying more than $1,200 extra in taxes each and every year. Kevin and Michelle won't be eligible for low-income credits, and the tax cuts are not going to cut it.

Can the Premier actually look at Kevin and his two kids and tell them why they should believe that he knows best? Why should they believe that you know best? They know best. The HST is going to hurt them.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think it's really important that we find a way to land on some objective, reliable information. I want to come back to this report called Not a Tax Grab After All: A Second Look at Ontario's HST by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Page 4, item 7: "The net combined effect of all the changes—new HST plus sales/property tax credits plus personal income tax reductions—is very close to neutral, a $27 annual loss in income when averaged over all families in Ontario." On the whole, it works out to be a wash.

Again, I've never met a mum or a dad who doesn't want to do everything they can to ensure that there are jobs today for themselves and jobs tomorrow for our kids.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier as well. For every story like Kevin's, there are thousands and thousands more. Because the Premier isn't willing to listen, I'm going to share some more of those stories.

Janet Croce writes this: "We have a small beauty salon in Toronto. I have been in business in the same place for 42 years—our clients are mostly seniors—we have grown old together. With the PST now being added to their hair services, we are already hearing them say that they will have to cut back. I believe that this could possibly be the straw that breaks the camel's back, so to speak. It is the small businesses like ours that will suffer."

How can the Premier claim that his HST will create jobs when small business owners like Ms. Croce are saying the exact opposite?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We have a few stories, of course, on this side of the House, that we'd like to share. One comes from John—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members from Renfrew and Lanark will please come to order.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to make reference to a story told to us by John and Marie Voortman. They are the owners of Countrywide Recycling Inc. They are in the riding of Niagara West–Glanbrook. They said, "The HST will benefit us in the building of our plant and in buying our equipment. The money we'll be saving will enable us to do more business and hire more employees." More specifically, they say that they can hire 50 new workers. That's 50 new jobs. That's 50 families that stand to benefit as a result of those new jobs.

We have always maintained that what we are asking of Ontario families—

Mr. John Yakabuski: What did you pay them to give you that quote?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member from Renfrew will withdraw.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: What we are asking of families is not an easy thing to do; we understand that. But we also understand that collectively, as Ontarians, we will do today what we've always done. We will do whatever it takes to secure a bright future for our children and our grandchildren. That's fundamentally what this is all about.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think it's fundamentally important that the Premier hear from people who can't afford tickets to Liberal Party fundraisers.

Rhonda Peart writes this: "I am 52 years old and unemployed. I was laid off from manufacturing a year ago January. We will be paying $92 more per month."

Kathy Mireault from northwestern Ontario adds: "My husband and I ... live paycheque to paycheque.... We cannot even afford to put away for our retirement and this HST is going to hurt us even more.... We have had mill shutdowns and layoffs. A lot of people are struggling."

Will the Premier finally acknowledge that the HST actually kicks people when they're already down?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Families want to ensure that we have a strong economy. They want to ensure that we have the capacity to support their health care. They want to ensure that we have the capacity to support schools for their kids. They want to make sure that we can continue to hire water inspectors and meat inspectors and pay for our roads and bridges and the like. They want to make sure that our businesses are strong and growing.

Here's another example: Tomlinson construction in the Ottawa area. They've got 1,000 employees. They're telling us that they will be able to buy about 20 new trucks a year as a result of the savings that we will bring about because of the huge savings on their input costs. That's going to stand for more employees. That stands for more families that are led by somebody with a job. That stands for a stronger local economy. That stands for a capacity to support our schools and our health care and build a brighter future for our families. That's fundamentally what these tax reforms are all about. It's a better and brighter future for Ontario families.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here is what Fred VanSickle, a Hamilton Pilates instructor, says: "The HST will affect by business ... [it's] going to add more financial hardship to the senior citizens in my studio who exercise with me to keep themselves out of the health care system."

Leigh Davies from London says the McGuinty HST will cost him $50 more per month.

Families say the McGuinty HST is going to hit them hard. Small businesses say the McGuinty HST is going to hurt their bottom line. If his HST is such a good deal for families and businesses, then why is it—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I apologize. I would suggest that the three members—the Minister of Finance, the member from Renfrew and the member from Hamilton East—who want to have this cross-debate please take it outside so that the other members can enjoy question period.

Please continue.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If the HST is such a good deal for families and small businesses, my question to the Premier is: Why is it then that they are writing to me by the thousands upon thousands to tell me that they think it isn't?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, my honourable colleague raises some questions, and I would put some other questions to her. Why is it that the University of Calgary is telling us we'll create 600,000 new jobs? Why is the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives telling us that this works out to be revenue-neutral? Why is it that we've had so much support from so many groups that transcend partisan lines?

If you take a look at what's happening in Nova Scotia, not only do they have the HST in place there, not only have they had it for some time, not only do they have an NDP government, but they're going to actually increase it from 13% to 15%. That's not something that we're prepared to adopt in the province of Ontario, but again it speaks to an issue that it's something that's an important policy. It's something that you have to do to strengthen the economy. It's something that you have to do, especially given that we've come out of a recession. We've lost 250,000 jobs. We need to grow stronger. Not everything that we need to do is necessarily easy, but we need to grow strong, we need to build that bright future for our kids, and that's fundamentally what this is all about.

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: To the Premier: In what could be considered a desperate panic attack yesterday, a band of desperate Liberal cabinet ministers took a travelling road show to a number of Ontario PC ridings at taxpayer expense to contain the mounting anger at Dalton McGuinty's greedy HST tax grab. But this latest tactic is proving less successful—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Members will please come to order.

Please continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Again, they are pretty desperate. But this latest tactic is proving to be just as ineffective as the sales job they're trying to do in this chamber. Only 10 people showed up for Minister Duguid in Whitby. Are these staged taxpayer-funded HST events with handpicked audiences intended to boost the morale of your cabinet, of your caucus or both?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Somebody has got to stand up for the Conservatives in Ontario who are supporting the HST. We're proud of Minister Flaherty and the position he has taken on the HST. We're proud of Minister Baird. We're proud of Minister Clement. We're proud of the former leaders, John Tory and Mike Harris. We're proud of Senator Runciman. We think it's time that somebody in the province of Ontario finally stood up for Ontario Conservatives who are standing up for the HST in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to invite the Premier to come back down to earth and meet the people on Main Street. After almost seven years, Dalton McGuinty is too tired and out of touch to hold real consultations with seniors and families in Ontario, and he's making them pay his greedy $3-billion tax grab.

The McGuinty Liberals fought against holding legislative hearings here in this chamber in December. You were too scared to debate a motion of mine that would call on delaying the HST until after the next election. You should come to the Barrhaven Legion. You should come to Moncion's grocery in Riverside South. You should come to the French Café in Manotick.

I have a question: Will Dalton McGuinty host the HST travelling road show so that everyday families and seniors in Ontario can meet their ministers and share their real-life concerns on what the HST is going to mean to them?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Take that, Dalton.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Start the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Just like how children anticipate Christmas, there's just one more sleep.

Laughter.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, we're prepared to act as an honest broker to help resolve the differences between the federal Conservatives and, in fact, so many provincial Conservatives as well. I am prepared to use the auspices of my office to arrange a meeting on neutral territory for the honourable member opposite and Minister Baird so they can reconcile themselves to the differences and hopefully find a way forward. They can have it out in a civilized way. We'll make sure that no harm comes to either side.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Offer espresso.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We'll make espresso available.

Once again, I want to thank Minister Baird, so many on Parliament Hill and so many former leaders of the party for their strong support of this initiative.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Howard Hampton: A question to the Premier: Your open-for-business legislation contains some truly anti-worker provisions. It contains employment standards changes that would force workers to disclose to the employer the details of workers' employment standards claims even before an investigation has begun.

My question is: How does getting the employers carte-blanche power to intimidate their workers into withdrawing their employment standards claims even before an investigation has been held do anything to create jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: With the modernization of employment standards, what it could deliver for all parties would be faster, smarter, more streamlined ways of getting employment standards claims dealt with. In many instances, those claims are because the parties don't have the information beforehand where they can resolve the claim before it has to be dealt with by one of our employment standards officers.

We have met with stakeholders; we have consulted on this. This will help address the time it takes to deal with an employment standards claim. It's good for all parties, and we've ensured, working with advocacy groups for workers and working with employers, that this new process—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: The last time I heard that rhetoric was when the Mike Harris government took their axe to the Employment Standards Act.

This government clearly doesn't understand how much power employers have and how little power workers have, especially in non-union workplaces. Forcing vulnerable workers to disclose to their employer the details of their employment standards claim before an investigation of the claim has even been held will inevitably intimidate workers into withdrawing the claim or never putting in a claim in the first place.

The question is this: How does putting vulnerable workers in an even more vulnerable position do anything to help workers and do anything to create jobs in Ontario?

1110

Hon. Peter Fonseca: We have worked closely with workers' action groups and labour groups as we work through modernizing our employment standards. This is so that we can help those who make claims to get those claims, those monies that are owed to them, paid much quicker. We also have put in provisions to address any vulnerable workers in Ontario where they may have difficulty in terms of filling out those claims. We have the supports at the Ministry of Labour, through our employment standards office, to provide those workers with those supports.

So we will be working with all stakeholders to ensure that workers' rights are upheld through employment standards and that claims are dealt with in a much quicker manner, so those monies—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. Glen R. Murray: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. Small business plays an important role in the communities of my riding of Toronto Centre. Small businesses are one of the leading employers in Ontario and provide jobs to people across the province. These jobs allow people to provide for their families and contribute to Ontario's economy.

Jack Mintz, the economics chair at the University of Calgary, estimates that our comprehensive tax package will create 591,000 jobs, $47 billion in new investment and an increase in working wages. People understand that the HST is implemented to help people get back to work. What they are looking for is how the tax package is going to create jobs. Minister, could you please explain to us how—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my colleague for the question. There are a couple of things. First of all, we're lowering the cost of business for every small business—and every business—in the province of Ontario by billions of dollars starting on July 1. What we're doing is we're taking those savings and we're putting that money into the wallets of consumers: the people whom you represent. For example, millions of Ontarians are receiving over a $1-billion personal income tax cut that came in on January 1. On July 1, millions of seniors will receive some $800 million more by way of an enhanced property tax credit. Millions of Ontarians will be receiving $270 million by way of enhanced tax credits. Millions of Ontarians with the least will receive billions of dollars in the new HST rebate, and just a few weeks from now, millions of Ontarians will receive billions of dollars, tax-free, by way of a transition.

Putting money into the wallets of consumers is always good for small business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Groups from across the spectrum have voiced their support for our comprehensive tax reform package because it will make Ontario more competitive, create jobs and protect services. The president of the Canadian Auto Workers, Ken Lewenza, has said, "We are arguing about elements of the harmonized sales tax, but brothers and sisters, don't buy into this tax rage...."

Bell Canada, on the other end of the spectrum, has stated that the implementation of a single sales tax structure in 2010 means Bell can accelerate jobs and its investments in this province from Ottawa to Hamilton.

Michael Oliphant of the Daily Bread Food Bank has said, "In terms of the net impact of the sales tax harmonization, we think that overall it will actually improve the incomes of low-income"—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: It's quite simple: We have a plan to have 600,000 more consuming families in the province of Ontario because a member of that family has a job, a job that would not exist if we didn't take the bold step of reforming our antiquated tax system and getting it into the 21st century so we can compete for 21st-century jobs.

Some 600,000 jobs is good news for small business. Lowering the cost of their business is good news for small business. There is not a single large business that wasn't at one time a small business. They generate the new jobs. According to Dr. Mintz, this will attract some $47 billion worth of new investment but result in almost $30 billion worth of more income.

I know that small business people want to see a market where there's more income and—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier. Premier, you have overseen an appointment process for Ombudsman André Marin that is nothing short of a three-ring circus. It is a 17-week fiasco, where you initially tried to replace Ontario's watchdog with a Liberal lapdog, a former Liberal MP. When that tactic didn't work, you wanted to call for a new round of advertisements. Then you wanted to re-interview candidates. Then you wanted to introduce four candidates, then just one candidate.

All the while, Premier, the Liberal government engaged in an unprecedented smear campaign against the character of the Ombudsman. You either looked the other way or you green-lighted this attack. Premier, will you stand in your place and do the right thing? Will you apologize to André Marin and the people of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to take this opportunity to thank the selection panel for the work that they did. I'm pleased that there was unanimous support ultimately for this reappointment. I want to congratulate Mr. Marin. I want to undertake to him personally to continue working with him and working well with him. He has served our government well in the past in pointing out shortcomings. We do all kinds of good things in government, but we do nothing perfectly. He has the responsibility to point out those imperfections, to provide us with recommendations, and our responsibility is to act on those recommendations. We have done that and we look forward to continue to do that in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, this gets down to a question of your leadership. Ontario Liberals engaged in an unseemly and slanderous attack on a well-respected officer of the Legislature. Ontario Liberals engaged in one of the dirtiest whisper campaigns against a public servant in memory. Premier, you have yet to hold a single person accountable.

Even after you told folks to heel, to pull your attack dogs back, Warren Kinsella, the man you picked to run your campaign war room, kept at it. Even after members of the assembly agreed to reappoint André Marin, where the PC party has stood, Mr. Kinsella even last night attacked the character of the Ombudsman. Premier, will you do the right thing? Will you apologize and will you chastise your attack dogs—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee for the work that they did. I want to thank Mr. Marin for reapplying, for the

work that he's done in the past and for the work that I know that he will continue to do for us into the future. These things are not necessarily easy things, and like democracy itself, they can be a bit slow, they could be a bit messy and they can sometimes be cumbersome, but at the end of the day, they always give us the right result. I have every confidence in this result, as I do have confidence in Mr. Marin himself. I look forward, as I say, to continuing to work with him.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, People for Education state that school boards continue to report that they must ration services, deal with funding shortfalls and figure out how to support an ever-increasing proportion of students with increasingly complex needs; 86% of the schools continue to report waiting lists for special education services. While these kids are waiting, they're falling further behind. There are 32,000 students in the province waiting for special education services. When are these students, 32,000 of them, going to get the service that they are entitled to?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: First of all, I would like to thank the People for Education for their report. We always welcome receiving—it's a very considered and thoughtful document. We also appreciate the good work that we do with the People for Education.

With respect to the highlight on special education services, that has been a priority for our government since we came to office. That is why, since coming to office, we have actually increased funding in special education services to the tune of 42%. I would offer that that has been in the face of declining enrolment across the province.

We do recognize that there are challenges, certainly, in a range of localities across the province where engaging specialized services to support special education students is a challenge. But we will continue to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

1120

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The truth is that the 32,000 number is only the tip of the iceberg. The report states: "Waiting lists shrink when fewer students are referred for assessment," which suggests that the number of 32,000 is a low number, that there are more and more students waiting for services. This has created a system where there are not only fewer services for students, but there is no accountability for the progress of special students. These are the neediest of the needy, and they are being left in classes without support.

When will the government create a new delivery system that will meet the needs of special needs students across the province and help those desperate parents who are looking to you for help?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: First of all, I also want to recognize the work that's being done by our teachers in the classrooms, by the administrators at the school level, certainly by school boards, who continue to do everything they can to engage families to understand how we can best support the needs of their students.

I think it's also important to remind the honourable member that, with regard to the students who are in need of services, some of those services are actually provided by professionals outside of the school system, so there are wait-lists for students to be seen by professionals who are not employees of school boards but who are health professionals in our communities. We continue to work with community partners to ensure that those students receive the services in a timely way so that the professionals in the classrooms are going to be able to put a plan in place to best meet the needs of those—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

WATER QUALITY

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of the Environment. For generations, Ontarians assumed that we would always have the safest and cleanest drinking water in the world. This month, as we mark the 10th anniversary of the Walkerton tainted water crisis, we are reminded that clean and safe drinking water can no longer be taken for granted.

A key recommendation from Justice O'Connor's review was for stronger training and certification rules for the operators of our water systems. Earlier this month, the Premier visited the Walkerton Clean Water Centre, which is a key part of the efforts to ensure that we have the most thoroughly trained water operators anywhere in North America.

Minister, how does the Walkerton Clean Water Centre help to protect our drinking water?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Let me, first of all, congratulate the member for her advocacy on behalf of clean water in the province of Ontario on an ongoing basis.

The Walkerton Clean Water Centre was created in October 2004 to coordinate and deliver training for owners and operating authorities of drinking water systems with a focus on smaller, remote and older systems, as well as systems that are operated by First Nations. This new centre has followed through on a key O'Connor recommendation, and to date, over 23,000 individual water operators across this province in both the public and the private sector have been trained at the centre.

The centre delivers the ministry's two mandatory courses: one entitled entry-level drinking water operator; and the second, preventing water-borne illnesses. It does so not only at the centre but at various locations across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: We rely on the operators of our drinking water plants to keep our families safe, and I know the centre was initially established in a temporary site to ensure that the training could begin as soon as possible. I understand that a permanent facility

will be established in Walkerton to continue this good work. This new facility will also be a flag in the ground for drinking water protection in Ontario and the transformation of the community of Walkerton to a centre for drinking water excellence.

Minister, when will the permanent centre be complete, and how will the new centre further improve drinking water quality in this province?

Hon. John Gerretsen: All of us look forward to the official opening of the new permanent centre later on this month, which I will be attending as well.

The new facility delivers on the promise for a permanent clean water centre in the town of Walkerton. It will provide an anchor to our commitment to the delivery of clean, safe water. It's a state-of-the-art technology to provide hands-on training to deliver every aspect of drinking-water-operator training.

The new facility has state-of-the-art video conferencing equipment so that they can provide access to remote communities for training. It also has three permanent classrooms, which will have the ability to expand. The centre has a technology demonstration facility which provides a state-of-the-art educational opportunity for hands-on training, technology demonstration and research.

It's a great occasion for the centre to be opened this month.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Minister of Education. The results are in: Your new school bus tendering process means higher rates eventually, less competition, putting safety into the hands of the lowest bidders as well as driving small operators out of business.

As a result, yesterday, you know that the Independent School Bus Operators Association protested the process. They staged a demonstration at your office with over 40 school buses there. At the same time, they held a press conference here to shed light on this new, unfair process, which is forcing small operators out of business.

Minister, why are you not addressing this issue and making sure that small business people don't lose their livelihoods?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: First of all, I think that it's important that I would remind the honourable member that the priority with respect to transporting children to schools is safety. We want to ensure that we provide the safest means possible for our children to get to school. We also spend annually some $800 million in providing I think it's 17,000 buses to carry our children to school.

We want to do this and we want to engage these businesses in a fair, transparent, open and accountable process. I believe that the taxpayers of Ontario have an opinion about sole-source contracts. We want to be able to say to them that we have exercised due diligence with a process that (1) considers safety and (2)—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I go back to the minister. The reality is, this new process can well result in putting safety in jeopardy if it goes to the lowest bidder and maintenance becomes an issue. I want you to know what you're doing to people, and you're not dealing with it.

Lesa McDougall, owner of Cook School Bus Lines of Mount Forest—her family business had 19 bus routes. As a result of this new process—and she is just one of many independent operators who have lost business—they have gone from 19 to one route. They've gone from employing 25 people to only two. This is in Perth-Wellington. Lesa and her family have lost their business to the large operators because of your policy.

Why are you so determined to destroy small business bus owners like Lesa McDougall?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What we are determined to do is ensure that our children get to school with the safest means possible. We are determined to ensure that we provide these services in an open, accountable and transparent process. That is why we continue to work with the Ontario School Bus Operators' Association. We very much value the points that they make to us.

I would also remind the honourable member that we have done a pilot project in Waterloo region and that there are small and medium bus operators who were actually winners in that pilot process experience. I would say to the honourable member that if you're going to present examples, let's present all the examples. Let's be open and tell the whole story that the process that we're working on, and continue to work on, with the school bus operators—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. In March 2009, an RFP was issued for an independent review of this government's new practice of benchmarking children with autism. Oddly, this RFP was not broadly circulated or posted on the MERX website, as is standard practice. After going through the FOI process, my office found that the RFP was highly restricted and invited one bid, a bid raising questions of conflict.

How did such an important RFP become a sole-source contract?

1130

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to acknowledge the parents of children with autism who are here today in the gallery with their children. I very much appreciate the insight they gave us as to how we can better support their children so they can reach their full potential.

We are working closely with parents and clinicians to develop a system of supports that provide services for as many kids as possible. We have much more work to do, and we are already doing that work.

I want to take a moment to talk about the progress we have made since 2003. We've removed the previous gov-

ernment's age six cut-off and almost quadrupled spending, from $44 million to $165 million. We've doubled the number of kids getting IBI treatment, up from 500 four years ago to 1,370 now. We've introduced a respite program, and we have established Connections for Students so that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Perhaps I'll get an answer this time. A contract valued at more than $118,000 on a subject as important as benchmarking children who might have their autism therapy terminated as a result should be filled by the best and most qualified candidate. But there was no competition. The ministry handed the contract to its invited applicant, Dr. Louise LaRose. She had a number of conflicts, like her close ties to the chair of the benchmark panel itself, but omitted this on her RFP form.

In light of these issues, my question to this Premier is a serious one: Will he issue a new RFP to obtain an independent review of the autism benchmarking policy for this province?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Dr. LaRose was selected to analyze the impact of the proposed benchmarks through an invitational request for proposals. The ministry followed all required processes in selecting the expert, and we are reviewing Dr. LaRose's analysis and considering our next steps. As I said, we know there is much more work to do, but I am proud of our record, and I will contrast that record with that of the NDP any day.

Our record is one of action; theirs is one of talk and inaction. We promised to end the age six cut-off, and that's exactly what we did. When the NDP was in office, they did not set up any programs to support kids and families with autism. Since we have been in office, we've doubled the number of kids getting IBI and almost quadrupled spending. When the NDP was in office, they cut funding to children's treatment centres. We have increased funding to children's treatment centres.

We know there is more work to do. We continue to do that work with parents and experts alike to find a pathway to better serve these children and ensure that they—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New Question.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. With the passing of the 2010 budget, members of my community were pleased to see the budget's schedule 2, creating a new independent board of health in the city of Ottawa.

Currently, our city council in Ottawa acts as the board of health for the city of Ottawa, a situation created when the city was amalgamated under the City of Ottawa Act, 1999. In October 2008, Ottawa city council passed a motion to call on the provincial government to amend the act to authorize an independent board of health under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Recognizing the benefit of independent governance of public health in Ottawa, I was pleased to champion the idea on behalf of my community and introduced Bill 194.

Minister, please share with my constituents and with Ottawa city council why your ministry agreed that Bill 194 was of great importance and ensured its passage by including it in the 2010 budget?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The McGuinty government has made it a priority, of course, to work alongside our municipal partners to create a good working relationship. We've provided municipalities with the tools they need to serve their communities better. We recognize that municipalities are responsible and accountable levels of government. We understand that municipalities are better able to determine appropriate mechanisms for delivering their local services.

The request to create a new independent board of health came from the city of Ottawa. I would like to recognize the member for Ottawa Centre for his advocacy on this matter. The province is providing the city of Ottawa with the tools and flexibility required to meet the needs of its citizens. I'm confident that an independent board of health in the city of Ottawa, with mixed membership of community members and council members, will lead to better governance by promoting—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Besides major episodes like the most recent H1N1 pandemic, many routine or community-specific public health programs also require a consistent and thoughtful approach to ensure that the best possible public health outcomes are the goal. Clearly, politics and emotional opinions can sometimes cloud decisions that need to be taken in the best interests of public health.

I commend Ottawa city council for actively seeking to improve the way we approach public health in our city. I'm pleased to have been the conduit for this important change in our provincial legislation, and along with the community, I am certain of the necessity of it.

Minister, could you please tell this House and my constituents about the importance of public health and what this new change will mean for the city of Ottawa?

Hon. James J. Bradley: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would like to congratulate the honourable member for being such a champion of health care in Ottawa.

The changes to the City of Ottawa Act allow for the creation of a semi-independent board of health responsible for the important health policy decisions. City council will retain responsibility for the financial decisions. The board will function under the framework of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, and the structure of the board is modelled after the city of Toronto Board of Health. The board will make recommendations to the city council on any issues within Ottawa's jurisdiction involving public health considerations. They will report annually to the city council on board operations.

This is good news for the city of Ottawa. It will eliminate the conflicts between the management and the

funding of city services and will allow for more specialized health care decisions in Ottawa.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. In a letter to all MPPs yesterday, the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition told members of this House that "the economic situation facing Ontario farmers is dire." Agriculture income was negative $50 million in 2009. This year, that loss is projected to be a record 10 times greater, at half a billion dollars. In their letter they say that "the future of food and farming in Ontario, without a workable risk management program, is clearly bleak."

Premier, tomorrow this House will debate my resolution that calls on your government to implement the business risk management program that farmers have been asking for. My question is simple but very important for farmers: Will you support the business risk management program?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I sincerely want to thank the member for the question because it is a very critical question. Before I go into my supplementary, which I'm looking forward to, I want to speak to what our farmers want today. They want predictability, they want stability and they want bankability. They want to know what the future holds for them. Our government has been working with the coalition to develop a risk management program and take that forward to the FPT. There is much good work that is happening with the coalition and the McGuinty government.

One of the things that I want to speak to specifically is that letter. The letter speaks to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary. The member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Madam Minister, farmers have asked that both levels of government fund the program, but right now neither one has any money on the table. You haven't budgeted a single dime to implement this program this year. In fact, according to your ministry's own estimates, you have actually cut $144 million from the program that provides direct support to farmers.

Minister, will you lead by example and support the resolution and commit that Ontario will fund its share of that program this year?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I've got to say, that's pretty rich from that side of the House. When they were in government they did not provide any income stabilization. We have put on the table $1.7 billion. We understand that the business programs today, the pillars of agri-stability, are not working. We are working with the coalition. I can tell you that one of the things in the letter that was addressed is that these programs have always been funded fed-prov together, 60-40 splits. We recognize that, and that is why we're working with the federal government. And the coalition recognizes that.

I ask the members, when they write a letter, why would they not write a letter in support to the Minister of Agriculture at the federal level? I don't know why they won't. We recognize that in order for a program to work it has to be all levels of government working together. Our farmers recognize that. They—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I really think that the members need to go visit the Glengarry–Prescott–Russell reception and have some really good St-Albert cheese curds. There's another very good business from Vankleek Hill that they might want to go visit as well, too.

New question.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Premier, the Massey Centre strike is going into its sixth week. Nerves are frayed. There have been several reportable incidents. Parents, workers and administrators are living with incredible strain. There's fear that the centre may not survive in its current form. If this centre is damaged, your government will be accountable for that. Will you act now, today, to address the funding shortfall that has put this centre into crisis?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I know I've had an opportunity to speak with the member opposite about the important services that the Massey Centre provides and the fact that, in the context of this labour dispute, the responsibility lies with the Ministry of Labour. But let me assure you that my commitment to the women and children who use the services of this community remains steadfast. The Toronto regional office is actively working to ensure that every parent, every young mother, every individual who is served by the Massey Centre continues to get those services. If that is not the case, they should connect with my Toronto regional office. It is absolutely a firm commitment that the women and children who use the services at the Massey Centre will continue to get the support and services that they need, as they have throughout this strike.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome a group of students who are visiting from Pope John Paul II school in Lindsay to the Legislature today, and also to welcome and to introduce once again our visiting delegation from Ghana. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill

43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1142 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On June 1, Mr. Milloy moved government notice of motion number 27.

All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duncan, Dwight	Mitchell, Carol
Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Naqvi, Yasir
Balkissoon, Bas	Gerretsen, John	Orazietti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Hoskins, Eric	Pupatello, Sandra
Best, Margarett	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Johnson, Rick	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sorbara, Greg
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Takhar, Harinder S.
Craitor, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	McGuinty, Dalton	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
Clark, Steve	Kormos, Peter	Shurman, Peter
Elliott, Christine	MacLeod, Lisa	Sterling, Norman W.
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Tabuns, Peter
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Paul	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hillier, Randy	Murdoch, Bill	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 27.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 27.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 27.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declared the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LES ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les organisations sans but lucratif.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? I heard a no.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1152 to 1157.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On May 17, Ms. Aggelonitis moved second reading of Bill 65, An Act to revise the law in respect of not-for-profit corporations.

All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia
Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Murdoch, Bill
Arnott, Ted	Hampton, Howard	Naqvi, Yasir
Arthurs, Wayne	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Hoskins, Eric	Orazietti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoy, Pat	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bartolucci, Rick	Hudak, Tim	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Pupatello, Sandra
Best, Margarett	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Rick	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz
Brown, Michael A.	Klees, Frank	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kormos, Peter	Shurman, Peter
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sorbara, Greg
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Chudleigh, Ted	Levac, Dave	Sterling, Norman W.
Clark, Steve	Matthews, Deborah	Tabuns, Peter
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Paul	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John	Yakabuski, John
Fonseca, Peter	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David
Gerretsen, John	Moridi, Reza	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 80; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 1, 2010, this bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

RETIREMENT HOMES ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LES MAISONS DE RETRAITE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes / Projet de loi 21, Loi réglementant les maisons de retraite.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes.

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? I heard a no.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Phillips has moved third reading of Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes.

All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John
Albanese, Laura	Fonseca, Peter	Mitchell, Carol
Arnott, Ted	Gerretsen, John	Moridi, Reza
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Orazietti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Hudak, Tim	Pupatello, Sandra
Best, Margarett	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Johnson, Rick	Sandals, Liz
Brown, Michael A.	Jones, Sylvia	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Klees, Frank	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Sorbara, Greg
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sterling, Norman W.
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chudleigh, Ted	Levac, Dave	Van Bommel, Maria
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Wilkinson, John
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	McGuinty, Dalton	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yakabuski, John
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Miller, Paul
Gélinas, France	Kormos, Peter	Tabuns, Peter

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 69; the nays are 6.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1209 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to introduce my husband, Germinio Politi, who's here visiting Queen's Park today.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: There are two people that I wanted to introduce: Peter Marrese and Paul Cochrane, who are here to hear a petition that I will be introducing in a short while, and they wanted to be present for it. Thank you for coming.

Mr. David Caplan: I would like to welcome the following individuals who are here today in the Speaker's gallery from the Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario: We have Lynda Staples, Diane McCauley, Randy Kall, Wayne Brocklebank and Bob Hunn. Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

KIDS' FISHING DAY

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Saturday last marked the 10th anniversary of our annual Kids' Fishing Day at Heber Down Conservation Area. I would like to take this occasion to offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to all the groups and volunteers who worked so hard at this year's event.

Saturday was a brilliant day, and record crowds of kids and parents came out to enjoy a fun-filled day of fishing and outdoor activities. There was no cost for the event, and children were able to take part in many activities, including conservation, invasive species trapping displays, lure making, face painting, a casting competition, and fish identification. It was the generosity and hard work of many community groups, outdoor organizations and volunteers that made this day successful.

I'd like to thank Ducks Unlimited; the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority; the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, zone E; Kids, Cops and Canadian Tire; Muskies Canada; MNR, Aurora district; Ontario Sporting Dog Association; the Optimist Club of Oshawa; Oshawa Community Health Centre, Durham Regional Police; Pickering Rod and Gun Club; Lindsay Trappers Council; Valu-Mart in Lindsay; Emm's Sports in Lindsay; Hawgtown Bassmasters; Eastview Boys and Girls Club; Simcoe Hall Settlement House; South Central Ontario Fish and Wildlife Association; WT Hawkins; Gagnon Sports; Calvary Baptist Church; the Toronto Argonauts; and Westmount Kiwanis for all their help. A

special thanks goes also to Walter Oster and the Toronto Sportsmen's Show, who, year after year, continue to contribute to the success of Kids' Fishing Day across Ontario.

The fishing was a little tougher this year, but many rainbow trout were caught by the young anglers. Each year, it's always a thrill to see the smiling faces, hear the words of encouragement and gratitude and know that many made a genuine difference in a young person's life. Thanks again to everyone who made this special day possible for children in our community.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Mr. Rosario Marchese: A recent Ontario Municipal Board decision has given the green light for high-rise towers to go up behind the Ontario Legislature. These towers, however, would mar the Legislature's distinctive silhouette, which has many residents and politicians alike upset that the interests of developers are being put ahead of the interests of the province.

Steve Peters, the Speaker of the Legislature, spoke out against the ruling, as did Andrea Horwath of the NDP and some Conservative Party members. "The ball is clearly in the government's court right now," said Mr. Peters. "I am appealing to the government, to the Premier, to the Minister of Culture, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to step in and preserve this building for future generations."

The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs can and should declare a provincial interest that would override the OMB's decision. I will introduce a private member's bill tomorrow that would prohibit any development north of the Legislature building that would mar the skyline around Queen's Park. The Ontario Legislature belongs to us and to the people of Ontario. This bill will give us the power to make decisions about the building and its views.

I hope that you will call me if you are in agreement and, more importantly, call the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and urge them to protect the sight of this building.

MORRISBURG GRANNIES FOR AFRICA

Mr. Jim Brownell: I rise in the House today to recognize the amazing Morrisburg Grannies for Africa, an organization in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. They will be joining with 200 other groups across Canada on Sunday, June 13, as they strive to turn the tide on HIV/AIDS.

Their community walk will begin with a kickoff ceremony at the Cruikshank Amphitheatre in Morrisburg. The AIDS pandemic and HIV have destroyed the lives of millions and led to enormous poverty in Africa. The disease has caused the death of countless family members and has left over 13 million children orphaned throughout many African countries. In most cases, the survivors who are left to care for the orphans are the elderly grandmothers.

The grandmothers in South Dundas and across Canada are participating in a national event to support and honour the courage of those elderly grandmothers who take on the challenge to care for the orphans in countries all across Africa. The goal of the Morrisburg Grannies for Africa is to raise awareness about the role played by African grandmothers and to raise money to support many valuable projects operating in Africa through the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

In addition, the event hopes to encourage and gain support for the education of all those who wish to help children living in poverty and who provide learning opportunities for them. All monies pledged and collected will make an enormous difference in the lives of the needy grandmothers and their grandchildren in Africa.

I would like to wish all those participating in the Morrisburg Grannies for Africa event much success, and I congratulate the volunteer organizers of the Morrisburg Grannies for Africa for their efforts to raise awareness of this important cause.

ELK MANAGEMENT

Mr. Randy Hillier: This government has long known about the significant problems with nuisance elk near Bancroft. For over six years, nothing has been done to help the farmers and landowners who have had their crops and property destroyed year after year. Bill 212 has not been implemented and MNR officials recently told farmers that it may take another two years to do so.

The farmers of Bancroft cannot wait any longer. The ministry caused this problem and they must fix it now, not in another two years.

Is this government going to dither and dawdle until farmers either take the law into their own hands and start shooting the elk or is this government just waiting and hoping for these farmers to go out of business?

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Mr. David Zimmer: Tomorrow is the last day of this current session and I thought I might take a minute and just recognize some of the unsung heroes here at the Legislature.

We as members are here all the time. We've been sitting late nights the last while, but the real people who make the Legislature operate and make life easier for all of us here are the committee clerks: Deborah Deller and her team, Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum and Anne Stokes; the Sergeant at Arms; and Wayne Butt, whom we see here, the access coordinator, whose job is to manage and make sure that the pages are all on the job and helping us out.

My own particular group that I want to thank are the librarians down at the legislative library, because when I find the need to escape from this place, I go down there. I read the newspapers; it's nice and cool, it's quiet, it's relaxing.

Our translators are spending long hours here.

These are the unsung heroes. They have to sit; they have to listen; they can't take sides; they've got to offer fair advice and guidance to all of us from whatever party. So I think it behooves us, at the end of this session, to give them a special congratulations. How would you like to have to spend your time here dealing with us?

VE DAY

Mr. John O'Toole: It was my pleasure and privilege to have attended the 80th anniversary of the Uxbridge Royal Canadian Legion, branch 170, on Sunday, May 30. I'd like to congratulate president Jack Ballinger of the Legion, as well as all of the veterans and Legion members on this milestone of 80 years; and also Bill Ballinger, a former member here, who emceed the event that day.

At the celebration, I was pleased to meet the Uxbridge Secondary School students who returned from the 65th anniversary of the Victory in Europe demonstrations or visitation. I would like to pay tribute to all the students from Durham riding who were present at the Victory in Europe tour. Students from Uxbridge Secondary School, Port Perry High School, Courtice Secondary School, Clarington Central Secondary School and Clarke High School toured the Netherlands and were special guests of the VE Day observations. They were among the 2,400 Canadian students travelling with the VE education tour on a journey that helped them understand and remember Canada's contribution to the victory in World War II.

Citizens of all generations in Durham riding remember Canada's wartime sacrifice and the price that was paid for our freedom.

1510

THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I rise today to acknowledge the Thames Valley District School Board in my hometown of London.

Each year, the Thames Valley District School Board hosts a Special Olympics track and field meet. This provides the opportunity for students to participate in athletic activities, as well as forge new friendships. This event serves a twofold purpose: to encourage and provide students with developmental disabilities the opportunity to participate in athletic activities, and to provide a space for all students to learn teamwork and have some fun.

Each athlete is paired with a peer student, who coaches the athlete on their specific event. Over 1,000 peer students came from 55 different schools to participate in the Special Olympics track and field meet.

The range of activities included those that are similar to sports that able-bodied students can partake in, while others were customized to the needs of particular students.

I would like to commend the Thames Valley District School Board for the efforts in organizing inclusive school events where students from all walks of life can participate and develop lifelong friendships.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you, and also I want to repeat my thanks to the Thames Valley school board for their efforts on a yearly basis to bring students together for a special event and to have fun.

ITALIAN REPUBLIC DAY

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Today, June 2, is Italian National Day or Italian Republic Day, as it's called. This official public holiday, which marks the republican and constitutional foundations of the modern Italian state, is celebrated in Italy and by Italian communities throughout the world to reflect on the country's transition to peace and democracy following the devastation of World War II.

Over the years, thousands of Canadians of Italian origin, who have made vast contributions to the social, cultural and economic sectors of Ontario and Canada, have become accustomed to celebrating la Festa della Repubblica here in Canada too.

Earlier this afternoon, la Festa della Repubblica was celebrated here on the grounds of Queen's Park. It's a celebration that is organized every year by the members of this Legislature. We had the raising of the flag in the presence of the Consul General of Italy, Dr. Gianni Bardini. Many other consuls general were present, and many members of the Italian community at large. It's a non-partisan event. We had members from the other parties who were present.

Allow me to say to all Italians and to Canadians of Italian origin who reside in Canada: Viva l'Italia. Viva il Canada.

LAKE SUPERIOR

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Legislature for unanimously supporting my resolution last year that proclaimed Lake Superior Day the third Sunday in July.

I want to express my thanks to Jim Coyle for sharing in his Toronto Star column the absolute beauty and grandeur of the largest body of fresh water in the world.

Lake Superior is 560 kilometres long, 260 kilometres wide and has an average depth of 150 metres. Lake Superior holds 10% of the world's supply of fresh water.

This summer I invite all Ontarians and visitors to take a drive along this magnificent coast. You will not be disappointed. But while you're soaking in the vistas and enjoying the experience, I want you to take advantage of the North of 49 festival, which will be held in Hornepayne. Visit Winnie the Pooh's hometown in White River, and celebrate the 125th anniversary of the CPR coming through town. Enjoy Wawa's celebration of the 50th anniversary of the completion of the Ontario stretch of the TransCanada Highway, and countless other events from Gros Cap to Thunder Bay.

We hope you will join us this summer along the north coast of Lake Superior.

As Mr. Coyle says, "A trip around Lake Superior might not prompt one to believe in God. But it would leave the traveller with no small reverence for the forces of creation."

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to welcome representatives of the Hospital for Sick Children's Safe Kids injury prevention program, which promotes youth safety: Amy Wanounou, coordinator, government relations and public policy; and Denyse Boxell, project leader, Safe Kids Week. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations / Projet de loi 46, Loi relative aux soins fournis par les organismes de soins de santé.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated Tuesday, June 1, 2010, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Michael Prue: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr33, An Act to revive Sandringham Developments Ltd.

Bill Pr34, An Act respecting the Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

Bill Pr35, An Act respecting the Ontario Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Inc.

Your committee further recommends that the fees and the actual costs of printing at all stages be remitted on Bill Pr34, An Act respecting the Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ACCESSIBLE PARKING ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LE STATIONNEMENT ACCESSIBLE

Mr. Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 88, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Highway Traffic Act and the Municipal Act, 2001 with respect to accessible parking / Projet de loi 88, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto, le Code de la route et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités relativement au stationnement accessible.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. David Caplan: The Accessible Parking Act, 2010, amends the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Highway Traffic Act, 2001, and the Municipal Act, 2001.

The Highway Traffic Act is amended to provide for the issue of two categories of accessible parking permits: level 1 parking permits for persons with disabilities who require the assistance of mobility devices, and level 2 parking permits for persons with disabilities who do not require the assistance of mobility devices.

Further, the City of Toronto Act, 2006, and the Municipal Act, 2001, are amended to require the city of Toronto and other municipalities to establish a system of accessible parking and to designate accessible parking spaces for both categories of accessible parking permits.

This bill also allows persons with disabilities who hold accessible parking permits the convenience of receiving assistance by resolving a parking infraction notice by telephone.

NEWCOMERS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LA CRÉATION DE DÉBOUCHÉS POUR LES NOUVEAUX ARRIVANTS

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 89, An Act to implement measures relating to newcomer employment opportunities by amending various Acts / Projet de loi 89, Loi mettant en oeuvre des mesures visant à créer des débouchés pour les nouveaux arrivants par la modification de diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

1520

Mr. Tim Hudak: If passed, this bill, the Newcomers Employment Opportunities Act, 2010, will allow new

Canadians to best put their skills, experience and training fully to work in Ontario.

It has three components: first, to provide a new 10%, non-refundable tax credit to eligible employers who arrange for occupation-specific English-as-a-second-language or French-as-a-second-language training for immigrant employees; second, to lower the investment requirements for immigrant applicants applying for permanent resident status in the investor category of the provincial nominee program, if the immigrant investor plans to operate a business outside the GTA; and third and finally, it would require regulated professions to make training materials and credentialing information available to prospective immigrants online, while empowering the Fairness Commissioner to monitor the reasonableness of Ontario's professional credentialing processes, comparable to other jurisdictions.

HEALTHY DECISIONS FOR HEALTHY EATING ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 FAVORISANT DES CHOIX SAINS POUR UNE ALIMENTATION SAINE

M^me^ Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 90, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act to require a food service premise to display the number of calories of food and drink items sold or served at the premise / Projet de loi 90, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé pour exiger des lieux de restauration qu'ils affichent le nombre de calories des aliments et des boissons qui y sont vendus ou servis.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

M^me^ France Gélinas: The bill amends the Health Protection and Promotion Act to require a food service premise with a minimum of five locations and a gross annual revenue of over $5 million to display the number of calories contained in the food and drink items that are sold or served on the premises. The bill makes it an offence to contravene this requirement and imposes fines for first, second and subsequent offences.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT (SEWAGE SLUDGE), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT (BOUES D'ÉPURATION)

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to regulate the spreading and storage of sewage sludge and biosolids / Projet de loi 91, Loi réglementant l'épandage et le stockage des boues d'épuration et des matières sèches biologiques.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. John O'Toole: The bill amends the Environmental Protection Act to require that a person obtain a certificate of approval from the director before spreading or storing sewage sludge or other biosolids and products derived from them. The certificate of approval may be subject to the testing, recording and reporting requirements that the director sees fit.

MANDATING SPRINKLERS IN ALL ONTARIO RETIREMENT HOMES ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'INSTALLATION OBLIGATOIRE D'EXTINCTEURS DANS TOUTES LES MAISONS DE RETRAITE DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Paul Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 92, An Act to require automatic sprinklers in all Ontario retirement homes / Projet de loi 92, Loi exigeant l'installation d'extincteurs automatiques dans toutes les maisons de retraite de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Paul Miller: When it was clear that the McGuinty Liberals were not going to take the necessary action to protect seniors through Bill 21, I felt that I had to do something more—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I need you to read the explanatory note. I doubt that what you're reading is in the explanatory note.

Mr. Paul Miller: Okay. When passed, the bill will ensure that this vital sprinkler retrofit must take place to protect our seniors from the horrors of retirement home fires. This bill requires retirement home operators to ensure that the home is equipped with automatic sprinklers. The sprinklers must comply with any requirements that the minister may prescribe.

FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION AMENDMENT ACT (FIRE SPRINKLER RETROFITTING), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PRÉVENTION ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INCENDIE (INSTALLATION RÉTROACTIVE D'EXTINCTEURS AUTOMATIQUES)

Mr. Craitor moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 93, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 with respect to fire sprinkler retrofitting / Projet de loi 93, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie à l'égard de l'installation rétroactive d'extincteurs automatiques.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Kim Craitor: The bill amends the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, to require that specific care occupancies that have been in existence since before March 16, 1998, be equipped with a system of automatic sprinklers. It has the endorsement of the Ontario fire marshal and the firefighters.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I glanced at the explanatory note, and that wasn't in the explanatory note. I remind members to please read the explanatory note. If you have a very long explanatory note, you can shorten it, please.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 30 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ROBERT EATON

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Robert Eaton.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I rise on behalf of the New Democrats and the leader of the Ontario NDP, Andrea Horwath, to express, first of all, our condolences to the family of Mr. Eaton, who served in this Legislature from 1971 to 1985.

We all know that members who come to this place come here with—how would you say it?—sort of a different background and a bit of a different take on what it is that they want to do when they get to this Legislature. Clearly in the case of Mr. Eaton, from what I was able to read, although I did not know Mr. Eaton—I was not serving here in 1985. I've gone back and looked at what was available in the library, and what struck me was that this was a gentleman who came from the farm, who understood what hard work was, who understood what it was to care for animals on the farm and to raise crops and to have the responsibilities that are so necessary to make a farm productive and successful.

When he came to this Legislature, he remembered all about that. He was all about making sure that he didn't forget where he came from, that he recognized that at the end of the day, although he was elected to the Legislature by the people of Middlesex, he had a certain bent to him, and that bent was making sure that he advocated on behalf of the agricultural community of Ontario.

1530

What is interesting, if you go back and look at Hansard, is that in many of the debates, even though they may not have been about agriculture, he found a way to slip it in, because he understood the people he represented in the Middlesex area. Many of them were farmers, and he understood that the people back home wanted to make sure that their issues were heard here in the Legislature, but more importantly, that the issues that were important to the farm community moved ahead.

In 1982, after a fair length of time of service in the Legislature, he was finally—actually, not in 1982 but prior to that, he was named the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, and in that time advocated in the ministry and with his colleagues in the caucus of the Conservative Party to advance those issues that are important to the agricultural community.

In 1982, he finally got promoted to cabinet. He became what we used to refer to as minister without briefcase or minister without portfolio. I think it was in recognition of the work that he did in his caucus and, more importantly, of his integrity. He was brought into the cabinet in a junior position in order to provide advice to the cabinet and to do the work that needed to be done by the then Conservative government.

Many people expected that he was going to be the next Minister of Agriculture, but as we know, in this place there are people sometimes who are Ministers of Agriculture of the day—I look at my good friend, whom I'm not going to name. They're there in that spot and they stay there; there's not a vacancy that happens to give you the opportunity to move ahead. So he never did get to serve as the Minister of Agriculture, not because he was not the most qualified person to do it but because others were there who served in that position well and the Premier had confidence in the Minister of Agriculture of the day.

In 1985, he lost, and that was a pretty big surprise. In politics, you go back and look at those ridings where you think the members are in good shape. People thought that Mr. Eaton was pretty solid in his riding and nobody expected in 1985 that he would be defeated, but defeated he was. In 1985 he was defeated after some 14, 15 years in the Legislature, to the chagrin of many in his constituency. Even though he lost the riding, people still came to him because he was known as a great constituency worker. Without resources and without an office, he continued to assist people in his community with the day-

to-day problems that people have when they come to see their elected officials.

I think it says something about Mr. Eaton that he was here not just because he wanted to be MPP but he truly wanted to serve the people of his constituency. Even after defeat, he continued to represent people in ways that he could to advance their issues with the contacts he'd made in the time he was here in the Legislature and the contacts he made in the Ministry of Agriculture and others that were important to his constituents.

He took great pride—and I just want to say that, because it was clear as I was reading through the information—in being a constituency MPP. I that is something that we see a number of people in this Legislature do and it's advice that I think we should take from Mr. Eaton and others as well. Although you might be elected to this Legislature in the government caucus and you might think that the work you do in the government is important, it's all about what goes on back home. This is something that Mr. Eaton understood.

He went back to private life after 1985. He thought briefly about possibly taking another run at politics, but decided, "You know what? My family has been without me for a while." I'm sure that his family let him know that in a very clear way. "You know what? When it comes down to it, I have a responsibility to my family," said Mr. Eaton, and he decided—and he said this in media interviews afterwards—that he would not run again in regard to his responsibility to his family. So he turned his attention to the many community groups that he worked with.

He was a very proud Lions member. He worked with the Lions Club for a long time. He was a Lion at heart, as we would say, both in the Lions Club and just as himself. He was also very involved in starting up the Dorchester senior citizens' community centre, which he was instrumental in getting funded.

I've got to say, in my last couple of comments, he was a lover of slo-pitch. It was interesting, as you go back and read some of the information that we had around clips, you would find clips in the media that referred to his time playing slo-pitch and coaching slo-pitch while he was in office and after. So, obviously, that was one of his passions.

I say, on behalf of New Democrats, to the family of Bob Eaton, we thank you for the service that this gentleman brought to the Legislature. I know that within your family you have lost somebody who's quite important to the family, but more important to Ontario, I think we've lost somebody who, quite frankly, gave great public service to the Ontario people.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm privileged to be able to pay tribute to Bob Eaton and the contribution that he made to the Ontario Legislature. I, like my colleague across the floor Norm Sterling, knew him very well. He was no shrinking violet, I can tell you that. He was a very assertive individual, to the point where some of his colleagues from time to time perhaps thought he was too assertive. I always thought he was simply representing his view and his constituents in a very appropriate manner.

Bob was considered to be part of the right wing of the caucus. That was back when there was a Progressive Conservative Party in Ontario and right-wing was way over there. Bob's thoughts were right-wing, but Jack Johnson, whom Ted Arnott would know very well, said that really he had a good social conscience as well. It wasn't as though he was all extreme right-wing or anything of that nature. But by those standards, he was right-wing. Today he would perhaps fit in more appropriately; it's hard to say.

He was a good guy—very attached to agriculture. Those of you who are from the agricultural community would know that not only did he go to agricultural college, of course, but he actually practised agriculture, breeding beef. I think he had both pork and beef operations that he was involved in deeply. So when he spoke about agricultural issues, it wasn't from theory; it was from practice.

He was a parliamentary assistant in several areas, which meant that he accumulated a lot of knowledge, when you think of transportation and agriculture. I know he was in consumer and commercial relations, as it would have been called then. So he had built up this knowledge. He had served on a number of legislative committees, where again he was assertive. I noted in one of the articles, when reading back about Bob, that it mentioned that he wasn't going to be muzzled by the fact that he was in the cabinet. Well, that's always a goal that everybody has when they're going into the cabinet, but Bob wasn't muzzled by it. He was minister without portfolio and chief government whip, so I wouldn't want to have been out of line, not in attendance appropriately, when Bob Eaton was around, because he would let you know quickly and vociferously that you were to be there.

He was very much a community guy. He was involved as a member of the board of education, 4-H Clubs, Lions Club. Even when he was a member, he had time to be part of community organizations.

My friend from the north made reference to the fact that he was involved in slo-pitch. It was over-65 slo-pitch, I think, which was really something when he was involved in that. He was always involved in that, and also what he called the Huff n' Puff basketball and volleyball crowd. I thought the only way anybody played volleyball or basketball was huffing or puffing, but apparently there was an actual league. It mentions here that indeed the teams he was on participated in world series senior games and won Ontario and Canadian championships. While it was for recreation and fun, one thing you would say—and I think Norm would agree—is that he was a very competitive individual.

Was he a partisan? Yes, he was. Everybody in the House is a partisan. He believed strongly in the Progressive Conservative Party. I thought things hadn't changed, because I was noting some of the things that he had had to say about the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, and just as today the Conservatives

aren't as complimentary as they might be of the Liberal Party and the NDP, he was not complimentary in those days. He criticized the opposition parties, saying that the Liberals had no policies to offer—imagine him saying that—and calling the New Democratic Party an "economic wrecking crew." He said the New Democratic Party "would have the government in such a financial disarray in a matter of a year that any independent individual would contemplate seriously leaving Ontario for another country."

Interjection.

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's indeed what you say.

But listen, he was a very good-hearted guy, with a family very supportive of him being in the Legislature. You all know the sacrifices, I think particularly when they're outside of Toronto, spending as much time as he did as a parliamentary assistant and then as a cabinet minister.

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Bob Eaton served the people of his constituency extremely well, he served the province of Ontario very well, and our province and his constituency and this place are all better because of his presence.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I would like to associate myself with the comments from Mr. Bisson and most of the comments of Mr. Bradley. I knew Bob Eaton quite well. When I got here in 1977, I soon recognized that Bob Eaton was truly a voice for the agricultural community. He was one of a group of three from western Ontario—I believe one of your predecessors, Ron McNeil, and the other one was Lorne Henderson. Quite frankly, they were quite a threesome when they got together, and on their own. All three spoke out very, very vociferously for the agricultural community. They not only spoke out in a very political way, but they also spoke out with a great deal of knowledge about that particular industry.

One must remember that they came from an area where the great Bill Stewart was from. Bill Stewart came from around the London area. I'm not exactly sure of the riding that he represented, because he was here before us.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: London-Middlesex.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: It was London-Middlesex. He was probably, and has been noted by many as, the most renowned Minister of Agriculture that this province has ever had. Some might differ, including my friend from Halton. I think Bob Eaton was instilled with the principles and the work that Bill Stewart had done as a forerunner and wanted in a lot of ways to emulate what Bill Stewart had done for the agricultural community in the 1950s and 1960s in this province.

I had the opportunity to visit with Bob on his farm when he was a member in the early 1980s. I saw his farm operation. Even at the time when he was in fact a member in this Legislature, he had a significant hog farm, primarily breeding sows. I can never forget going out to the barn with Bob. I was quite amazed at the extensiveness of the operation and his knowledge about what he was doing with regard to that particular operation.

Bob not only had a great deal of knowledge about the agricultural community, but he also owned an insurance business before he got into politics and remained owner of that until the mid-1980s when he couldn't any longer control that business or pay enough attention to it. After he left here, he went into the real estate business and back into the farming business as well.

It has been said already that Bob was a tremendous advocate for the agricultural community. He also was a tremendous partisan. He was loyal to his party. There was no question that Bob was a Progressive Conservative, and he never minced words with regard to his loyalty to his Premier and his party and that kind of thing. When he was serving as whip—I can tell you, serving under Bob as whip, you wanted to let him know when you weren't going to be around, because notwithstanding our personal friendship, he would let you know in no uncertain terms that you were not to be away without his knowledge.

I do want to talk about one very humorous incident that took place here with regard to Bob when he was serving as minister without portfolio. From time to time I threaten my good friend Mr. Phillips that I'm going to ask him the same question that was asked by a Liberal of Bob Eaton when he was serving as a minister without portfolio. One day, a member from the Liberal Party—I think I know who it was, but I'm not going to name that particular individual—stood up and said, "I have a question for Mr. Eaton, the minister without portfolio." The Speaker said, "Go ahead." He said, "Since you're a minister without portfolio, what do you do all day?" So I have threatened Mr. Phillips with that question, and I call it the "Bob Eaton question." At any rate, Mr. Eaton did take it all in good stride, and that was something we should remember.

But it's odd, you know. You look at the different characteristics of different people who serve in here. Bob was a very forceful person, and he used that characteristic in a lot of ways to gain successful conclusions to problems that his constituents had and the agricultural community had. He would let his cabinet colleagues and the Premier know in no uncertain terms what he wanted and that he was not about to budge with regard to that particular issue. He didn't win all the time, but he certainly would let you know in a very forceful way what he thought the agricultural community needed in order to continue to survive.

I've met some of his family. He was a very proud father and husband. He was fortunate in having 14 grandchildren at the time of his death early in 2009, and two great-grandchildren.

I believe that Bob Eaton was a tremendous asset to the people in Middlesex, a tremendous asset to the Progressive Conservative Party and a tremendous asset to the Legislature of Ontario. I think we all owe him and his family a great deal of gratitude for that service and for them allowing him to be here with us for such a long period of time and making that contribution.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's one of the challenges sitting in the Speaker's chair of representing

part of the riding that Bob Eaton represented too. I can't get into any of my own anecdotes, but certainly our paths did cross at election time, and I certainly knew who he represented.

But I have to say this about Bob. Bob called my constituency office about six months before he passed away. He was advocating for a cancer drug that wasn't on the list. I remember going out to see Bob at his home in Dorchester and sitting and meeting with him and him laying out on the table this great case as to why this drug should be listed. He was able to see that drug listed before he passed away, which just demonstrated that Bob was fighting on behalf of people right until the end.

I will ensure, on behalf of all members of the Legislature, that copies of the Hansard and a DVD of today's proceedings are sent to the Eaton family.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I know many of my colleagues are wondering why I have five very large boxes, one of which is a very bright colour of pink. Today, I am proud to read the following on behalf of 100,000 Ontarians who have signed petitions opposing the HST from Curves and condominium buildings, as well as regular Ontarians:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's plan to blend the PST with the GST into one 13% harmonized sales tax (HST) represents one of the largest tax hikes in Ontario history, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

"This new tax, which we are calling the DST (Dalton sales tax), will raise the cost of a long list of goods and services not previously subject to provincial sales tax, including: electricity, home heating oil and gas at the pump; haircuts, newspapers and magazines.... ; home renovations; heating and air-conditioning repairs; accounting, legal and real estate fees and condo fees; new home sales; rents will also go up; minor hockey registration fees will increase; and green fees and gym fees" like those at Curves will also go up;

"We, the undersigned"—100,000 strong today—"petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government not impose this new tax on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will require five pages to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

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SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm presenting a petition given to me by Peter Marrese and Paul Cochrane, who are here today. It's a petition signed by thousands of people, and it reads:

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 80;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

I support this petition and I will be signing it.

POWER PLANT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a petition to the Legislature today, signed by a number of physicians, nurses, surgeons and specialists in the Oakville area. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, in view of the recent natural-gas-fired power plant explosion in Connecticut and the placement in Ontario of such facilities in close proximity to homes and schools;

"Whereas, in view of the absence of enforceable standards for the level of fine particulate matter in ambient air since it was declared a toxic substance one decade ago under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act;

"Whereas, in view of the premature mortality and adverse health effects, largely attributable to fine particulate matter, which may arise from large natural-gas-fired generation facilities close to population centres;

"We, the undersigned physicians, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to institute the following:

"(1) A moratorium on the development of all natural-gas-fired power plants until appropriate safety setbacks are legislated.

"(2) The legislation of regulatory standards for fine particulate matter and the further regulation of precursor gaseous pollutions that contribute to its secondary formation.

"(3) A requirement that all natural-gas-fired power plants undergo an individual environmental assessment."

I agree with this petition, will sign it and will send it to the table with Luke.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition on behalf of Community Living in my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and send it down with Sarah.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have a petition certified by the Clerk, pursuant to standing order 39. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

Signed by Wendy Huffman and Dianne Cornwall of Port Colborne and hundreds of others, and my signature is affixed.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition delivered to me by Community Living Quinte West. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 80;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

I will send it with Rhett to the table.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now."

I have signed as I am in favour of this, and given it to page Luke.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Paul Miller: I have a petition that I'd like to introduce, a petition that, along with our NDP Ontario retirement plan, will make retirement a safer, more enjoyable time for Ontario seniors.

"Whereas over 60% of Ontario workers do not have a workplace pension plan; and

"Whereas some workplace pension plans have failed to provide promised benefits, especially during times of economic crisis; and

"Whereas, by contrast, Canada's public pension system is safe, secure and reliable and has been a key policy instrument in reducing poverty among Canada's seniors;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"(a) Support the following measures to increase retirement security for all Canadians: phasing in a doubling of CPP benefits, financed by a modest increase in worker and employer contribution; and increasing old age security (OAS) and the guaranteed income supplement (GIS) for all retirees; and

"(b) Take a leadership role in advocating for these measures with other provincial governments and with the federal government."

I agree with this petition and will affix my name to it, and Michelle will bring it down.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Joe Dickson: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas professional allowance revenues for generic drugs are not being used to directly benefit patient care and there is evidence of abuse in the system; and

"Whereas Ontarians pay far too much for generic drugs because of these professional allowances;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to pursue legislation that will put an end to this flawed system of professional allowances for generic drugs in order to reinvest the savings, to the benefit of all Ontarians."

I will attach my signature to this and give it to Rhett.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed."

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontarians pay significantly more money than comparable US states for precisely the same generic drugs purchased at pharmacies for diabetes, cancer treatment, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart conditions and many other types of treatment; and

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"Whereas Ontario taxpayers spend more than half a billion dollars each and every year on so-called professional allowances, which are money paid by generic drug manufacturers to big pharmacy chains to stock their product. This money does not assist patients, and instead pays for shareholder dividends, salaries, benefits, bonuses and overhead expenses; and

"Whereas drug costs are among the fastest-growing parts of Ontario's health care system. Taxpayers' funds should better be invested in improving access to new drugs to consumers and seniors and lowering prices on existing products; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has proposed a more equitable means of compensating community pharmacists for serving clients and will eliminate abuse by big pharmacy chains of rebates provided by manufacturers of drug products;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario and all members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly support Ontario's proposed changes to the regulations governing" pharmacies "and assist patients and Ontario seniors with lower drug prices and better access to more new drugs for all Ontarians."

I'm pleased to sign and to support this and to ask Mississauga–Streetsville page Vrajesh Dave to carry it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care; and

"Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty $15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the $1-billion eHealth scandal; and

"Whereas now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends;

"—increase wait times and lineups for patients;

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I affix my name in full support.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition is about stopping the exploitation of foreign workers. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas a number of foreign worker and caregiver recruitment agencies have exploited vulnerable foreign workers; and

"Whereas foreign workers are subject to illegal fees and abuse at the hands of some of these unscrupulous recruiters; and

"Whereas the federal government in Ottawa has failed to protect foreign workers from these abuses; and

"Whereas, in Ontario, the former Conservative government deregulated and eliminated protection for foreign workers; and

"Whereas a great number of foreign workers and caregivers perform outstanding and difficult tasks on a daily basis in their work, with limited protection;

"We, the undersigned, support ... the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, 2009, and urge its speedy passage into law."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ENSEIGNEMENT POSTSECONDAIRE

Mr. Milloy moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau postsecondaire, la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel et la Loi de 2002 sur l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Debate?

Hon. John Milloy: It's a pleasure for me to kick off third reading debate on behalf of the government this afternoon. I want to begin—as Bill 43, of course, is in its final stages of debate—to acknowledge the support and help of my parliamentary assistant, the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, for all his work both in formulating the bill and helping to usher it through committee.

I'd also like, Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, to acknowledge the fact that my mother-in-law, the mother of the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, is watching right now, and I know that she enjoys what goes on in the Legislature. I've never had a chance to say hello to her before.

To put the bill in some context, it's about post-secondary education in the province of Ontario. I think everyone in this House recognizes that post-secondary education in Ontario is key to its future. Post-secondary education really has two key components. It's about access, and it's about quality. As a government, we've made great strides in terms of allowing a greater number of students into our post-secondary system, and, at the same time, we've done great work to enhance its quality. We, as a government, are looking at a goal of having 70% of Ontarians have a post-secondary credential. At the same time, we're looking at opening up our doors to more international students to come in to enhance the system. We have to do that by, as I say, ensuring there's space in the system for these students, but also making sure that the system is one of excellence. Just to give a little bit of further context, how do we as a government, as a Legislature, ensure that excellence in the post-secondary system?

I just thought I'd spend a minute or two talking about the various ways in which we govern and administer institutions here in the province of Ontario.

When I talk about institutions, it's very important for the purposes of this bill that we recognize we're not simply talking about a public college or university. We're also talking about private career colleges, private institutions which undertake training for individuals. They're a big part of our Second Career program, vocational training and other training that's offered. We also have private universities. Often the ones we think of are of a religious bent, but they have the capacity to offer degrees and credentials to students.

How these institutions are governed is by individual acts of the Legislature. If you went through, you'd find there are individual acts that govern many of the colleges and universities we're aware of. Private universities, too, are governed by various private bills here in the Legislature.

We also have something that was brought in by the previous government in 2001, entitled the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, the PSECE Act. The PSECE Act provides another way by which a private institution can approach the government and have permission to offer a degree. We could have an act of the Legislature, or an institution could come forward through this act and ask that they be given permission to grant a degree. Under the PSECE Act, they make an application and it goes to a body called PEQAB, the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, which looks at applications that come forward from private institutions, community colleges and out-of-province public institutions for anyone who wants to offer a degree and go that route. They take a look at the offerings that have come forward and hold them to a very, very high standard. I must say that Ontario is recognized internationally for the very, very high standard that the PEQAB board, established by the PSECE Act, undertakes.

The other legislation that governs this post-secondary education amalgam is the Private Career Colleges Act,

2005. Before that, private career colleges were basically governed as any small business is governed. This, in 2005, recognized their important role in terms of vocational education, set up very important standards and enforcements for them, where the government can make sure that they're offering the highest education. Right now, we have about 500 private career colleges in the province, the vast majority of which are doing an excellent job.

As I said, Ontario has a very outstanding reputation when it comes to the quality of our educational institutions. We're seen as world leaders. But there's more that we can do, as there always is. We need to make sure that we strengthen the way we govern and oversee all these types of institutions in order to make sure that students are getting quality and in order to ensure that international students are coming here and pursuing the best educational options.

So, what we've done with this bill is, we've looked at three distinct acts, and we've put forward measures to strengthen them. I'm going to take a minute or two and address each part of this bill and each of the acts that they address.

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I'm going to start with the least controversial, and that's the Ontario College of Art & Design Act. I'm pleased to say that after a great deal of work and consultation, we have come forward with amendments that would change the name of the Ontario College of Art and Design to the Ontario College of Art and Design University. Establishing OCAD as a university would reflect the academic evolution of the institution. Consistent with the name change, changes to the act would also establish a university senate and amend the powers of the board of governors.

This, as I said, has been based on a great deal of consultation, and I chose to start with that because I think we have pretty much unanimous consent here in the Legislature that this is a very appropriate measure to be bringing forward, just based on the debate that I've heard.

In bringing this forward, I want to acknowledge the support of one of OCAD's greatest champions here in the Legislature, the member for York Centre, Mr. Kwinter. I also want to again acknowledge the co-operation with the administration, and note that we have Dr. Sara Diamond here with us today, as well as Carole Beaulieu, the director of government relations. Again, this has been working with OCAD to bring forward these amendments.

Just to give a little bit of background, OCAD was founded in 1876 as the Ontario School of Art. It was integrated into the provincial system of education in 1883, and was incorporated by an act of the provincial Legislature in 1912 as the Ontario College of Art. It is the largest institution in Canada devoted solely to the education of professional artists and designers.

In 2000, a panel of international experts was established to advise the minister on OCAD's ability to provide fine arts and design degree programs to the standard of an internationally recognized university. As a result of that review, the government provided OCAD with limited degree-granting authority through an act passed in the year 2002. Currently, OCAD has the authority to offer the following degrees: baccalaureate degrees of a bachelor of fine arts and a bachelor of design; and graduate degrees of a master of arts, master of fine arts and master of design.

The amendments we are proposing would provide OCAD with the tools it needs to grow in strength and in stature. As I say, I welcome the support of everyone here in the Legislature. Through the debate, I think we have all-party support.

The second part of today's bill deals with the PSECE Act, the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act. Since it has been brought in, it has been working very effectively in terms of reviewing applications for degrees. We have, however, had organizations in instances where they've challenged the act. To put it very bluntly, loopholes have started to become apparent where people could perhaps intentionally work around the very high standards of the act and exist here in the province of Ontario. We need to ensure the quality of it; we need to ensure the brand of it. Actually, if you want to go to the other extreme, as I said, some are perhaps starting to identify loopholes.

We also have instances where outstanding institutions with very straightforward applications under the PSECE Act to have a degree program approved by the government are finding that there are some obstacles and some administrative problems in the way.

What we have done is we have put forward a package of amendments that will address both these ends. On the one end, in terms of those who perhaps are of the unscrupulous variety, we put forward amendments that would allow us to have enforcement powers similar to those under the Private Career Colleges Act. It would strengthen those and allow us to shut down unauthorized educational institutions that are offering degrees and have no right to; they haven't gone through the process. The amendments would allow the minister to impose financial penalties as well as issue compliance and restraining orders against unauthorized degree-granting institutions.

Finally, the amendments would allow for greater flexibility and transparency in the application process and would allow us to set up a system where there are very straightforward situations where we could make sure they were dealt with as effectively as possible.

The final part of the bill that's before us today are amendments to the PCC Act, the Private Career Colleges Act. I think those like my mother-in-law perhaps, who are regular viewers of this channel, may be a little confused because for the last year or year and a half, they would have heard opposition members stand up in this House and say that the government wasn't being strong enough when it came to making sure that bad actors in the private career college community were being shut down, fined and punished for the work they were doing; that we weren't doing enough to protect students.

So we brought in a large number of measures that I'm going to be touching on in a second, and through this bill we're in fact enhancing those measures. Those individuals who were watching the Legislature in the last few days would have heard the opposition stand up and say, "Oh, my gosh, the government has it wrong. We're now too tough on private career colleges." I'm, quite frankly, a bit confused as to where the opposition is coming from, and I just want to spend a second and give a bit of an outline of private career colleges and how they've been dealt with by our government, a record that I'm very proud of.

To start, before our government came into power there was very little oversight of private career colleges in the province of Ontario. In 2005, my predecessor, Mr. Bentley, brought forward the Private Career Colleges Act, which set out powers of the ministry to make sure that private career colleges complied with government regulation, that they were offering the highest-quality student programming and that there were protections for students. In 2006, the act came into force. Very candidly I will state here in this Legislature that for the first period of time, we were very much in an education mode as a ministry, and we were trying to work with the private career colleges sector to make sure they understood the rules and regulations, to make sure that they understood our oversight powers and, at the same time, to begin to integrate them into the new system.

Those who have followed it know that during that period of time we have had instances of bad actors that have come forward, private career colleges that were, quite frankly, ripping off students. Although action was taken by the ministry, as I say, it was a transition period. Certainly our efforts to put more teeth into our enforcement, to make sure that we brought in the type of regime that was originally envisioned, was certainly encouraged by the work of the Ombudsman. There has been a lot of talk in this debate on it, and I'm going to give credit to the Ombudsman for a report that came out about a year ago called Too Cool for School, where he looked at what was going on here in the province of Ontario and underscored the need for greater protections and stronger enforcement.

We acted as we had planned. As I say, it was hastened in many ways by his report. What have we done? We've doubled the number of inspectors to 12. We've appointed new provincial offences officers with the power to issue court summons. We've introduced financial penalties for PCCs that break the law. We're also reaching out to students through a public awareness campaign to ensure they understand the importance of choosing a registered PCC and an approved program.

Part of the problem is that people set themselves up as private career colleges and they're not at all. So one of the big messages that I leave with every student is that if you want to pursue studies at a private career college, make sure that it's registered and that it's complying with the rules and regulations.

I'm pleased to say that in 2010 alone, the ministry issued 63 restraining orders and 78 notices of financial penalties to private career colleges that contravened the act or its regulations. Further, we are conducting risk-based inspections and are committed to working with colleges to bring them into compliance with our act.

As to Monsieur Marin, a lot has been said about his report, but everyone talks about the report like it was issued yesterday. In fact, it was issued a year ago. I had the pleasure of bumping into Monsieur Marin several weeks ago, when he actually came up to me and shook my hand and said, "Congratulations on the good work that your ministry is doing." In fact, a letter was sent November 16, 2009, several months after his report came forward. It was sent to the Deputy Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I'd like to quote it into the record:

"I would like to acknowledge receipt of your first quarterly report on the progress that the ministry has made in implementing the recommendations arising from my investigation into the ministry's oversight of Bestech Academy Inc. and its enforcement of the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005.

"I was pleased"—Mr. Speaker, you'll be interested in this—"to see that the ministry has moved forward with a number of concrete initiatives focused on ensuring greater student protection and more rigorous enforcement. I am confident that the ministry will continue to strengthen its oversight in this area...."

That is exactly what we are doing through this bill.

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The proposed amendments to the Private Career Colleges Act in this bill will build on the initiatives we have already undertaken and improve student protection. In particular, our proposed amendments to section 53 of the Private Career Colleges Act would provide further regulatory tools and would enable the superintendent of private career colleges to implement program standards across the entire sector over time. Over the past few years, staff at MTCU have met and worked with the sector. From these discussions, we've been working on program standards and a qualifications framework that will set out the expectations for each type of credential which private career colleges may award program graduates.

We know—and I want to stress this very clearly on the record—that the vast majority of private career colleges are good players. They want to align their programs with these standards to ensure quality across their sector and they want to make sure that we get rid of the bad actors, because it brings everyone down.

Based on feedback from the PCC sector and through what all members of the Legislature heard during public hearings on Bill 43, we were happy to make some changes to the legislation. Specifically, amendments were introduced and passed at committee that say that when a policy director revokes an approval of a credential—we have introduced an amendment which permits those who are currently enrolled in such a program to graduate and receive the credential associated with the program. Also, an amendment was passed that said a

private career college would be given a minimum of six months to come into accordance with a new policy directive. The exception to these assurances is in cases where a policy directive introduces a new standard related to public health and public safety or whether there are regulatory changes in entry-to-practice requirements; in other words, the curriculum has changed for someone to practise a certain profession, so someone who graduates would be left without the possibility of being able to work in that field. In these cases, private career colleges may be required to comply sooner with the policy directive and students may not be able to complete the program in which they were originally enrolled.

Again, I just want to stress that the vast majority of private career colleges in this province do an outstanding job. They are supportive of the action we are taking to strengthen the sector, to make sure that a student, either from Ontario or from overseas, who comes here and sees that the private career college is registered, that they are in compliance with the rules and regulations—which they can, through a simple click on our Internet site or a call to a TCU office—that they are getting the highest quality education.

With only about a minute and a half left, I want to go back to where I started and say what this is all about at its core: It's about quality of education. It's also about students. We're in a very transformational world right now. The jobs of the future are only going to those who have pursued education beyond high school, whether that's through one of our public colleges and universities, whether that's through a private university or an outside institution which is offering a course here in the province of Ontario or whether it's through a private career college. What we have to do as a government is to maintain the absolutely pristine standards that exist here in Ontario.

Open Ontario is an acknowledgment that Ontario is no longer isolated, that it's open to the world. That means open to students who want to come here and study. Through the passage of this act, we are sending a strong signal to Ontario students and a strong signal to students around the globe that Ontario is a great place to study and that the quality of higher education in Ontario is second to none. For that reason, I am very proud to support this bill at third reading and look forward to discussion from other members of the Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's good to have an opportunity to speak to this bill, and it's good to listen to the minister. He took the whole 20 minutes. He generally speaks for a few minutes and then shares the time with somebody else, but he decided to take the time, and it's a good thing that he's done that—

Mr. John Yakabuski: His mother-in-law told him to take all the time today.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Maybe because the mother-in-law is watching, which is a good thing. There have been a lot of concerns expressed, and maybe that's why he decided to take the 20 minutes—and that's okay.

First of all, I wanted to thank Sara Diamond for sitting patiently through this. It's been almost two hours. And Madame Beaulieu, merci beaucoup: You didn't have to come, really. We support you. Even the member from Simcoe–Grey supports you, and although they may oppose this bill for different reasons, he has made it very clear that they support the name change to "university" because you have a great reputation. You deserve it, and we want to make sure that the benefits of what you do are known across Ontario and beyond.

The member from York Centre was already thanked. He was a student there. He has been a strong supporter. We thank him as well for all the good work and the support that he has given to this now university. So that's out of the way.

But I want to speak to other elements that the minister has spoken to, because he took about three or four minutes to talk about how great the system is working in Ontario. He talks about being in a transformational world where post-secondary education is at the centre. He sounds correct and he makes sense, except we in Ontario are number 10 in per capita funding. That doesn't put us at the top of the list; it puts us at the bottom of the list. If indeed education is at the centre of this transformational world, why are we underfunding it? Why are we last in Canada? It's not a proud record. We have the highest class sizes in the country, and the ratio is 27 to 1. How can you be proud of that? How can education be at the centre and then we have a ratio that is the highest in the country? It doesn't make any sense. How can you offer the quality that students deserve when those ratios are so high, and climbing each and every year? We have a deferred maintenance program of about $1.6 billion, which is probably the highest in the country, and these Liberals are proud of it. What kind of a record is that?

Yes, education is important, but when tuition fees are the highest in the country, that's nothing to be proud of. When the average tuition fee of students is $23,000 in a regulated field, that is extremely high. When you want to be a doctor and you leave with $100,000 of debt, that is an incredible amount of money that you have to pay off, and it won't be easy paying it off. If you want to be a dentist or a doctor, you're going to have a debt of $80,000 to $100,000 at the end of it. It's huge. These are the things that make the educational system complex and difficult for students and parents who are trying to make their way in this complex world.

I wanted to just say to the minister, please, we have a long way to go in terms of what we need to do to create quality in the system and to help these students so that they don't have to work 23 hours a week to try to pay off some of that debt. We all know, and John Yakabuski knows, that when you work 20 or 30 hours a week—when you work 23 or 25 hours a week, it's going to affect your learning. We know you know, John. We know that a whole lot of young men and women are working on a daily basis, a weekly basis, to try to reduce that debt load, but it's affecting the quality of their education. That's obvious to me and it ought to be

obvious to any Liberal who's listening, except those who want to expound on how great they are and how great and how important post-secondary education is. Yet our students are finding it hard.

Please, I wanted to reject some of those comments made by the minister because he makes it appear like they're leaders. They're not leaders. Ontario Liberals are not leaders on post-secondary education. When it comes to the elementary and secondary levels, we are number 8 in per capita funding in the country and we are lower than many other states in per capita funding. At the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels, we are literally at the bottom. How can education be at the centre of this transformational world, yet we underfund it in so many ways that do not give us the quality that we're looking at?

1630

So, Minister, please, I just wanted to tell you that. It probably won't affect anyone much. Maybe your mother-in-law might agree with me, I don't know. If she does, let me know, okay?

With respect to this bill, you have increased fines. And I want to point out—because I don't want to repeat much of what I said yesterday—that the maximum fine that can be levied at the moment is $100,000, and the maximum fine that has been levied so far has been $39,000. So I have made the argument that if we have not yet reached the $100,000 penalty, why is it that you believe that you need to increase it to $250,000? I'll tell you why you're doing this: It's to give the appearance that you really are going to be tough against the rogue operators, the fraudulent operators, the illegal operators. You make it appear like you're going to get tough on them, and so far—I don't know. The record has been very poor.

Yes, you have made improvements since the Ombudsman has written two scathing reports against your ministry. Thank the Lord that the Ombudsman did those reports; otherwise I'm not quite sure what that ministry does by way of going after illegal and rogue operators.

Paula Cooper, one of the deputants, said the following: "There were two reports, one for privates and one for public. The common denominator in the both of those reports" by the Ombudsman "was systemic failures by the ministry. The common message I read is that TCU requires better internal organization, not increased power," and I'll get to that in a moment.

The point is, you have the power and you've had the power with your bills to go after rogue operators, those who operate outside of the law, those who are not registered. The point and the problem is, you haven't been going after them for years. Since the report made by the Ombudsman, you've started to do something. Merciful Lord, it's a good thing. How could it be bad? How could you have continued not doing anything year after year? So when you finally do something—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: That's a good thing.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm going to say, "That's a good thing that you've done, Minister." It's nothing to be proud of. Finally, you're doing something, but, okay, I'm glad you're doing it.

This bill, however, does nothing to go after the rogue operators. It doesn't. And what the deputants did, monsieur le Ministre with your hand gesture, all of the deputants who came to depute on this bill said exactly what I'm saying now: that this bill does nothing to go after those who are not registered, who are the illegal rogue operators. You may squint in negation, but this bill gives us nothing by way of what you are doing other than hopefully using the law that you have to go after them. Hopefully you will continue to do a better job, one that this government has not been doing for five and a half or six years.

It's noteworthy to mention that the private career colleges came to depute. No one came to support your bill, absolutely no one. All of the private career colleges—and by the way, I'm not generally one who goes out to lead the charge with private career colleges. I should tell you that. But they made a good, strong argument in defence of what they believe Bill 43 does against them, and I heard them. I don't believe most of your members did, except the parliamentary assistant, who said, "We hear you now and we will pay attention to you when we pass regulations." Except they said that when you, Minister, went to speak to the annual Ontario Association of Career Colleges conference held at Blue Mountain, you indicated that they had nothing to worry about and that any changes that were going to be made were technical in nature. When they read the bill, they were horrified and outraged. Why would that be? Because when they read the bill, and I have the bill here, and they read the section that deals with private career colleges on page 9—that's "Compliance." It's all here in this bill, private career colleges are on page 13. When they read that section, they were a bit disturbed, angry, and wanted to send the government a message.

What Paula Cooper said about this particular bill is that she is worried about the power that you have given to your superintendent that did not exist prior, because there is a power to revoke permission for whatever programs they provide. There's a power of revocation given to superintendents. What Paula Cooper said is that the internal problem has not yet been solved. What are the internal problems? We've had four superintendents in four years. We've had changes to assistant deputies—and I added, because I've been the critic for this minister for quite some time, we have had changes with deputy ministers and we have had changes with ministers themselves. This is the longest-serving minister we've had in a while. But we have had many, many ministerial changes that have given so much instability to this ministry that these private career colleges are worried that when you introduce these kinds of changes with this kind of power that is given to the superintendent to revoke a program—a program that allows them to be able to teach students whatever it is that they're teaching, because there are over 23,000 students in these private career colleges—they could find themselves in trouble, and they were nervous.

The parliamentary assistant said, "Don't worry," that whatever changes are going to be made in regulation,

they will be consulted. My sense is that after the commotion and the anger that was expressed by the private career colleges, they will consult with them, and the amendments that were not supported by the government are likely to be implemented indirectly by regulatory changes.

There were some amendments made by the Conservatives respecting the private career colleges that I thought were reasonable, that were not supported by the government members. I want to repeat them for the record. One of the amendments read as follows: "If a person who has received a notice of contravention applies for a review under subsection (6), the minister shall conduct the review in a reasonable time and shall commence the review within 30 days after he or she has received the notice under subsection (6) and shall otherwise conduct the review in accordance with the regulations." I felt it was a reasonable amendment: They would conduct a review in a reasonable time and shall commence the review within 30 days. The government members rejected that.

This gives cause for alarm to the private career colleges. When you reject such an amendment, that says to them that if you're not going to conduct a review within a reasonable time and within 30 days, that means some of these people could be out of luck for a whole long time; they would be suspended without being able to operate for quite some time. So they repressed the simple amendment that I thought, as I say, was reasonable. Liberals often say, "by any reasonable measure or standard," and I want to apply that language to this particular issue. This is a reasonable amendment, rejected by usually reasonable Liberals. I don't get it. I suspect that under regulatory changes this is probably going to be done, but they didn't want to support it by way of an amendment. I don't know why, but we'll see.

1640

Another amendment that I thought was reasonable: "The minister shall ensure that the amount of the penalties prescribed under clause (1)(h) and the amount of any fines prescribed in respect of this act under the Provincial Offences Act are publicly available on a website maintained by the ministry and are otherwise reasonably made available to members of the public."

The parliamentary assistant said, "Oh, but they are available on the website." My suspicion is that the private career colleges know they were not on the website. It's quite possible that there is the intent to put them on the website. Maybe it is now, but it wasn't when this amendment was drafted. But it is a reasonable request: Make sure that the penalties prescribed under this clause or under this act are publicly available on a website. If it becomes redundant, given that you might have done it of late, then you've lost nothing.

But even reasonable amendments were rejected by the Liberal members of that committee. There were a few other amendments that I supported—too long to get into.

The point is this: I believe that the superintendent is likely to behave in a reasonable manner, that is, likely not to rush through with some irrational decision. I believe that to be true. But the private career colleges do not believe that, and they, based on the fact that you did not consult them at all, might have a justified fear. That is the point they made that I reiterate, because it gives cause for concern.

So I say to you, are you going after rogue operators with this bill? I don't believe you are. Are you ensuring quality, as you claim? I don't know how much quality you're really giving by way of what the minister was saying about this.

It's not, in my mind, a historic bill, it's another little bill. But for the private career colleges it's an incredibly overpowering bill that they fear, based on the power the minister has now given the superintendent by way of being able to revoke approvals. That's something that the government, the minister and the parliamentary assistant need to work at as they go through the approvals.

I will be supporting this bill, but I wanted to tell the minister that it's hardly revolutionary, please. Secondly, you should reach out to those private career colleges because, based on what you have said, even though you tried to recover in your last minute by saying that a lot of private year colleges—based on what you said, you make them appear as if they're providing bad programs. They told us in committee, "We want you to go after the rogue operators. We want you to do that because we believe that most of us"—meaning the private career colleges—"are doing a good job based on what you have approved."

So they're not going to feel too great after they listen to your speech, by the way, although you might have calmed them down in the last minute where you said most of them deliver good programs. I think you should reach out to them, because on the whole you've ruined some of the rapport you may have had with them..

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm not sure if I'm that pleased to join this debate because I wasn't expecting to be joining this debate. Unfortunately, my colleague has been detained, but I have been looking at some of the notes that my friend and colleague Mr. Wilson has provided for me.

I want to thank the folks from Ontario College of Art and Design, which will be becoming a university. It was interesting reading that my friend Minister Milloy did not seem to remember that it was our government that got you on the road to becoming a university by giving you your start in 2002. Like my friend Mr. Wilson, we're very proud of that and very proud of the work that you do. Thank you for good work that you do, and thank you for joining us here today.

I guess Mr. Milloy conveniently forgot that because he was so caught up with ensuring that his mother-in-law watched today, and I hope she's watching now, because I like everyone to have the opportunity to watch the legislative channel. Unfortunately, there's not enough people who do watch it because, you see, in my area

most people have a satellite and they don't have cable. I've got a satellite because I live in rural Ontario. Of course, Bell doesn't carry the Ontario legislative channel on the satellite system anymore.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Shame. Shame on Bell.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's terrible. It's terrible that they do that. Maybe the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities could force them to do that on the grounds that it's educational. Then again, some days maybe it really isn't.

But one of the thing that I know my friend Jim Wilson, our critic for training, colleges and universities, has consistently spoken about in this bill is the fact that after years of total inaction on the part of the government, all of a sudden, near the end of April they decide they're going to bring in this piece of legislation and need to have it rushed through prior to the intersession when the House rises, presumably tomorrow, unless some kind of a catastrophe befalls us.

Mr. Joe Dickson: A miracle.

Mr. John Yakabuski: A miracle—that, too.

They had to rush this thing through. Ironically, just a couple of days after the bill was introduced, I believe that it was the private career colleges of Ontario that had a reception here. While I'm not the critic, I did go to the reception because the food is always good at these receptions.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I can't remember what, but it was tasty. I didn't write down the menu. The beer was okay, too.

I kind of thought, when this reception was going on, that these people were here because the bill had just been introduced and they were here to support the bill. Oh, my goodness, no, no, no. They weren't here to support the bill at all. In fact, they had severe reservations about this bill because of the design of the bill and what we were all led to believe, and the minister would have you believe that the reason they brought in this piece of legislation—and when we first saw this coming, we said, "Well, yes, it's been coming for a while; we've expected it for a while." There are all kinds of reasons why there should be legislation to crack down on the rogues and the crooked operators out there that have not been doing a good job, so the initial expectation was that that's what this bill is supposed to do. In fact, it will do less of that, and more, make it very difficult for the legitimate private career colleges to continue to operate here in the province. On top of that, of course, then the government brings in time allocation.

Now, I see my friend from York Centre, and he knows all about time allocation because he was in opposition, too. It's sort of maybe when the government doesn't really want to talk about it that they bring in this time allocation. But it wasn't just time allocation in the House here; it was time allocation in committee as well. It limited the amount of time that people who had a very, very deep interest in this bill could speak to the members of the committee and voice their concerns and their objections to all or part of the bill. But one thing that was found out about the committee, and my friend from Trinity–Spadina has spoken about that in his address—I'm not on that committee and I wasn't there for any of those hearings—the number of deputants who came in to strongly request the government to be making significant amendments to this piece of legislation and/or starting the process over again because they didn't get it right. And that's one thing that we do have a responsibility in this Legislature to do: to get it right.

1650

I'm just looking at some of the concerns that my colleague from Simcoe–Grey articulated and letters from people in the business. I have one here. It says:

"To whom it may concern:

"As a private career college (PCC) owner-operator for 20 years, I am writing this letter to express my concern over Bill 43, which is currently being debated in the House. My concern centres on the power this bill will give to one individual, that being the superintendent of training, colleges and universities (TCU) should Bill 43 be passed.

"Part of my concerns stem from the lack of knowledge that those sitting at Queen's Park have in regard to the private career college industry in Ontario. There is a problem with illegal private trainers masquerading as ... private career colleges in this province. I have worked very hard and invested a lot of time and money to come into compliance as a registered college offering approved programs and am supportive of any efforts at shutting down those that are operating outside the PCC act 2005. However, my concerns lie with the fact that if this same bill becomes law, it provides one individual with such discretionary power which could then be used against those that operate good schools"—to my point, where the private career colleges were supportive of the principle but questioning whether or not this bill is going to capture that—"without ever having had a complaint lodged against them with TCU, such as mine.

"One example of lack of understanding by those involved is the continued use of the phrase 'illegal private career colleges' ... when referring to an illegal entity operating outside the PCC Act 2005, having neither registered nor had their programs approved through TCU."

The letter goes on to say, "If they are not a registered PCC then the term should not be used to describe them, even if the word 'illegal' is used."

So what you're doing is you're using the word "illegal," which encompasses all private career colleges, when you're talking about an illegal entity that has never been registered as a private career college. I think it's a very legitimate concern that has been registered on behalf of private career colleges.

Continuing: "After 20 years in business I am now being accused of not operating in a financially responsible way and must provide audited statements, my programs may be deemed inappropriate and suspended under the reaches of these new powers, and prospective

students are told to 'protect themselves.'" That's apparently on the ministry's website. "Program consultants have become inspectors and investigators, and I already live in fear of retaliation if I challenge the government on decisions that affect what I have chosen to do for the past 20 years, as is evidenced by the recent Licence Appeal Tribunal hearing against the Niagara-on-the-Lake Culinary School Inc. that clearly points to an abuse of existing powers that could have dire results in my business should it happen to me.

"This Bill 43 needs to be openly debated. Those that are going to have their livelihoods affected by these changes need to have an opportunity to educate those who will be voting on this bill. Not only does Bill 43 need to be considered strongly, but the PCC Act 2005 in its entirety also. If not, choice for post-secondary education could be greatly affected for the people of Ontario if this bill becomes law and its power applied to good, moral, hard-working and predominantly compliant colleges. Given the rapid change of policy and definition as it pertains to the PCC Act 2005, full compliance is elusive at best.

"Yours in education and training,

"Michael Teglas,

"Owner/director, Academy of Learning (Kingston, Ontario)."

That's just a sampling of the concerns that have been registered against this bill, but I know I have other colleagues who do want to speak to this and I'm going to pass that on at this time. Thank you very much for allowing me to share in this debate.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, you don't. It's a rotation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The government has about a minute and a half. Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's always a pleasure to have the opportunity here, and I thank the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for his very informed remarks.

I had left some notes here because I wanted to speak on this after the minister had spoken on the Too Cool for School report from the Ombudsman. He sat on that report, which was kind of a warning, if you will, to the minister to do something.

But what was so disappointing about that is that they didn't consult with the private career colleges. They really didn't. In fact, that very day of the bill being introduced, we thought a reception had been arranged through the ministry because of the introduction of the bill—the bill that we're discussing, Bill 43—but in fact it was nothing of the sort. They were shocked and disappointed by the characterization that somehow all of the private career colleges aren't up to the task. In fact, they're filling a void, in many cases, of what's not being offered, alongside the publicly funded career colleges.

Even when I look at the failure of the Second Career program—I'm leaving a few questions on the table here on this. What are the careers of the future? We've heard over the last several years that we're going to have a chronic shortage of skilled trades. Many of those colleges that I think are providing that training in complement to the apprenticeship program would qualify as a private career college through the union halls.

The real disappointment here—and a surprise for me—is that there's a section of the bill that has not really been, I think, fairly opened or discussed. It's the portion with respect to certification. It's actually in section 2 of the bill, under subsection (2) and then subsection (3). This is kind of technical stuff, but it is important. It says:

"A diploma, certificate, document or other thing that implies or would be reasonably understood as the granting or conferring of a degree, including, without limiting the foregoing, a diploma, certificate, document or other thing that includes a reference to bachelor, bachelor's, baccalaureate, master, master's, doctor, doctoral or doctorate."

In subsection (3) it says: "For greater certainty, a diploma, certificate, document or other thing referred to in paragraph 2 of subsection (2) does not include a certificate, licence, registration or other form of official recognition that attests to the person being qualified to practise a trade or occupation...."

There's the section that's most troubling. Why are they saying that they cannot grant a certificate to practise a trade or occupation?

To my satisfaction, the Working Families have been paid off. What I mean by that is, they're the only ones now—that's the college of trades—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Perhaps we could use a little different language than was used there. Just temper it a bit, please.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'll rephrase that. Pardon that interjection, Speaker.

I don't know just how to frame it any differently, other than to say that the only persons now who would be qualified to grant a certificate—qualified to practise a trade or occupation would be the Working Families group, under the college of trades, the new college that was created under different legislation. I find that problematic.

The one common theme that I think our critic, Mr. Wilson, and our caucus would agree with is that untoward practices by any college—career college or other college—of not giving value for money, or not having legitimate instructors or course content that actually leads to skill development and pure knowledge, are wrong.

If people are being falsely lured to these unregistered—in many cases, these colleges that we're referring to wouldn't be part of this bill. This is the other part. If they're not registered as part of the private career college group, how are you going to enforce the specific demands of Bill 43? And if they're not registered, are they going to be inspecting them? These are the ones that, when there's a complaint brought to the minister's attention by an MPP—whatever the political party; it doesn't really matter—where the person has been somehow defrauded of their tuition money or hasn't gotten quality or the college goes down, how are they going to get their money? How are they going to get money back

from the college if it has gone bankrupt? There has to be some proactiveness here.

1700

He said there was going to be a program to educate some of the students or those applying to these colleges, and I still say, what are the careers of the future? Second Career in my riding—what I'm hearing now is that people are taking court recorder courses and other kinds of courses, but there are no jobs. There's a serious problem here.

With this HST, the harmonized sales tax, this new 8% tax, they're talking about the fact that there are going to be 600,000 new jobs over the next 10 years. Let's put this into the light of day: Over 10 years, 60,000 new jobs—there will be more new Canadians than 60,000, so that isn't even going to hold the numbers up. Over 10 years, 600,000? It should be 100,000 jobs a year.

I can't believe that some of the parts of this bill are actually going to do very much. It sounds good, but the actions, I think, belie the fact that the auditor's report should still be paid attention to. We need that, and I'm glad to hear that Mr. Marin will be back. I would say he should be. He's one of the best we've had.

There are some things that I would want to be on record as supporting, and I want to put this on record again for the second time. This was published in April, and it says, "The other change to post-secondary education announced Monday will make it easier for Ph.D. students to get permanent resident status after they finish their degree." This is actually good.

What it says is that "currently, Ph.D. students can start the process of acquiring permanent resident status ... only if they already have a permanent job offer."

Many of these researchers from other countries who receive their doctoral degrees in research legitimacy here—and this is a commendation to the minister. A personal example here is that "Irada Ibrahim-Zada, a Ph.D. student in the U of T's department of laboratory medicine and pathology ... is from Azerbaijan. She is doing research about why certain cancer drugs do or don't work well with different patients depending on their genes.

"Ibrahim-Zada said removing the rule that requires a permanent job before applying for permanent" residency "will boost her chances of being able to stay and work in Ontario." And, I might add, make a valuable contribution to this province.

Many of the researchers who come here—we want them to stay, and if this bill does that one thing, it may accomplish something.

But when I look at it in terms of some of the implications for the private career colleges that aren't serving their student population well, I need assurance that this isn't just 12 new inspectors who are going to be inspecting randomly. They should be following up on complaints lodged by MPPs or by students who have been disappointed in their programs. If I have that assurance, I gather that this bill will do something to a situation. But many of those career colleges do provide a valuable opportunity for people where there's no space for them under the current colleges that serve Ontario.

It's a bill that gives the impression that it's doing a lot; it really isn't. I leave the question on the table: What are the jobs of the future? What are we training our students, our young people, for in the future in a province that's raising taxes and reducing services every single day in this Legislature? I find this bill an important debate today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2010, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Milloy has moved third reading of Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-Secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), a request that the third reading on Bill 43 is deferred until after question period on Thursday, June 3.

Third reading vote deferred.

FAR NORTH ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE GRAND NORD

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 19, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North / Projet de loi 191, Loi relative à l'aménagement et à la protection du Grand Nord.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2010, I am now required to put the question.

On May 18, 2010, Mrs. Jeffrey moved second reading of Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I have received the proper documentation signed by the chief government whip to defer the vote on this bill until after question period on Thursday, June 3.

Second reading vote deferred.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 31, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 68, An Act to

promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 68, Loi favorisant un Ontario propice aux affaires en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2010, I am now required to put the question.

On Monday, May 31, 2010, Mr. Gerretsen moved second reading of Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I have received the proper documentation to defer the vote on this bill until after question period on Thursday, December 3.

Mr. John Yakabuski: June.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): June 3, thank you. I'm either behind or way ahead.

Second reading vote deferred.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move that the orders for second and third reading of the following private bills shall be called consecutively and the questions on the motions for the second and third reading of the bills put immediately without debate:

Bill Pr29, An Act to revive 962 Bloor Street West Limited;

Bill Pr30, An Act to revive the Durham Region Classic Mustang Club;

Bill Pr31, An Act to revive Deepa Gas Limited;

Bill Pr33, An Act to revive Sandringham Developments Ltd.;

Bill Pr34, An Act respecting the Luso Canadian Charitable Society; and

Bill Pr35, An Act respecting the Ontario Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Inc.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

962 BLOOR STREET WEST LIMITED ACT, 2010

Mr. Ruprecht moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr29, An Act to revive 962 Bloor Street West Limited.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

962 BLOOR STREET WEST LIMITED ACT, 2010

Mr. Ruprecht moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr29, An Act to revive 962 Bloor Street West Limited.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

1710

DURHAM REGION CLASSIC MUSTANG CLUB ACT, 2010

Mr. O'Toole moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr30, An Act to revive the Durham Region Classic Mustang Club.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

DURHAM REGION CLASSIC MUSTANG CLUB ACT, 2010

Mr. O'Toole moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr30, An Act to revive the Durham Region Classic Mustang Club.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

DEEPA GAS LIMITED ACT, 2010

Mrs. Albanese moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr31, An Act to revive Deepa Gas Limited.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

DEEPA GAS LIMITED ACT, 2010

Mrs. Albanese moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr31, An Act to revive Deepa Gas Limited.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

SANDRINGHAM DEVELOPMENTS LTD. ACT, 2010

Mr. Caplan moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr33, An Act to revive Sandringham Developments Ltd.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

SANDRINGHAM DEVELOPMENTS LTD. ACT, 2010

Mr. Caplan moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr33, An Act to revive Sandringham Developments Ltd.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

LUSO CANADIAN CHARITABLE SOCIETY ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2010

Mrs. Albanese moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr34, An Act respecting the Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

LUSO CANADIAN CHARITABLE SOCIETY ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2010

Mrs. Albanese moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr34, An Act respecting the Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF THE PURCHASING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF CANADA INC. ACT, 2010

Mr. Rinaldi moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr35, An Act respecting the Ontario Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Inc.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF THE PURCHASING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF CANADA INC. ACT, 2010

Mr. Rinaldi moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr35, An Act respecting the Ontario Institute of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada Inc.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Orders of the day.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House is adjourned until 9 of the clock Thursday, June 3.

The House adjourned at 1715.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters
Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margarett R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craitor
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Amrit Mangat, Phil McNeely
John O'Toole
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Glen R Murray, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: David Orazietti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Bob Chiarelli, Steve Clark
Helena Jaczek, Kuldip Kular
Dave Levac, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Orazietti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, M. Aileen Carroll
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Leeanna Pendergast
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Reza Moridi
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Norm Miller
Yasir Naqvi, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
M. Aileen Carroll, France Gélinas
Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay
Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craitor
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Continued from back cover

Time allocation
Motion agreed to 1905
Time allocation
Motion agreed to 1905
Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010, Bill 65, Ms. Aggelonitis / Loi de 2010 sur les organisations sans but lucratif, projet de loi 65, Mme Aggelonitis
Second reading agreed to 1906
Retirement Homes Act, 2010, Bill 21, Mr. Phillips / Loi de 2010 sur les maisons de retraite, projet de loi 21, M. Phillips
Third reading agreed to 1906

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mrs. Laura Albanese 1906
Mr. Rosario Marchese 1906
Mr. David Caplan 1906

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Kids' Fishing Day
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette 1906
Heritage conservation
Mr. Rosario Marchese 1907
Morrisburg Grannies for Africa
Mr. Jim Brownell 1907
Elk management
Mr. Randy Hillier 1907
Legislative staff
Mr. David Zimmer 1907
VE Day
Mr. John O'Toole 1908
Thames Valley District School Board
Mr. Khalil Ramal 1908
Italian Republic Day
Mrs. Laura Albanese 1908
Lake Superior
Mr. Michael A. Brown 1908
Visitors
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters) 1909

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

Standing Committee on Justice Policy
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti 1909
Report adopted 1909
Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills
Mr. Michael Prue 1909
Report adopted 1909

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Accessible Parking Act, 2010, Bill 88, Mr. Caplan / Loi de 2010 sur le stationnement accessible, projet de loi 88, M. Caplan
First reading agreed to 1909
Mr. David Caplan 1909
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Thursday 3 June 2010

Jeudi 3 juin 2010



Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 June 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 juin 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Hindu prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

EXCELLENT CARE FOR ALL ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR L'EXCELLENCE DES SOINS POUR TOUS

Ms. Matthews moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations / Projet de loi 46, Loi relative aux soins fournis par les organismes de soins de santé.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I will be sharing my time with the member from Scarborough–Rouge River, my parliamentary assistant, who has done an exceptionally fine job in taking this legislation through committee.

I rise once again in this chamber to urge all members in this House to pass the proposed Excellent Care for All legislation at this third reading of the bill. This legislation is vital if we are to have a modern, accessible and equitable health system in this province, a system that delivers the kind of quality care Ontarians deserve today and one that will be there for our children and for our grandchildren.

I'm very proud of this legislation because I know that it will result in positive changes for Ontario's patients. Universal, single-payer health care is a core value that all Ontarians share. It is a precious gift that was passed to us from earlier legislators and one that we have a responsibility to pass on to future ones.

In order to continue making essential health care services available to our population, critical changes will have to be made—changes to attitudes, to approaches, to processes; changes to our basic conceptions of what the health care system should look like in the future. The entire system must put the needs of the patients first and foremost, and that means looking for ways to add quality and value to a health care system that serves the people of this province and is paid for by the taxpayers of this province.

Speaking of taxpayers, each and every one of them expects us to manage their dollars wisely to get the very best value out of every dollar we spend in health care. As you know, over the past several years, health care has been consuming an ever greater portion of the pot. That's why it's imperative that we place a greater emphasis on patients getting better quality care, which in turn will mean that we will all be getting better value for our money.

There are many examples of hospitals already implementing measures to improve quality. Let me share a couple of examples. The University Health Network: They have an interdisciplinary quality committee. Everyone from doctors to nurses to other health care workers all have a voice in improving quality. In Sault Ste. Marie, the Sault Ste. Marie Group Health Centre has reduced the number of patients rehospitalized for heart failure by 43%, and they've achieved a 25% to 33% reduction in diabetes-related complications. How have they done this? By putting a greater emphasis on quality. In Thunder Bay, they've reduced bed-empty time—that's the time between discharging a patient and admitting a patient—by 25% by implementing measures to make the process more efficient. And in Ottawa, they've developed the internationally renowned Ottawa ankle rules, simple guidelines developed to aid emergency physicians in deciding when to use X-rays for patients with ankle injuries. The application of the Ottawa ankle rules is something that has reduced the number of X-rays for patients who come in with an injury to their ankle.

This proposed legislation, along with complementary initiatives, will help develop a culture of quality, where everyone working in health care, from the CEO to the front lines, including the board of those health care organizations, is focused on quality improvement for patients. From now on, the focus will be on better care delivery, leading to better patient outcomes, and smarter use of resources thanks to a culture of quality and value within the health system.

I was very, very pleased to hear that the vast majority of our health system partners and stakeholders are supportive of our vision and our process for getting there. To quote from the submission from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the RNAO, to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, "The RNAO welcomes" legislation that "seeks to promote evidence-based" best practices "and make health care organizations and executives accountable for providing the highest-quality patient-centred care."

The Ontario Hospital Association had this to say: "The OHA strongly supports Bill 46. Ontario is home to the most efficient, transparent and accountable hospitals in

Canada," but "we all recognize ... that the public" we serve expects more.

There were a number of submissions received at the committee, and I was quite pleased with the enthusiasm stakeholders have shown for this legislation. In fact, many of the amendments were adopted, which I think speaks to the level of co-operation and support for this initiative. My colleague MPP Bas Balkissoon will speak in more detail about some of those amendments.

0910

Specific quality improvement initiatives will start in hospitals. As you know from the previous two readings, the bill is based on the following four principles. The first principle: Care must be organized around the patient to support his or her health. The second principle: Continuous quality improvement is a critical goal. The third principle: Payment, policy and planning must support both quality and efficient use of resources. The fourth principle: Quality care must be supported and, indeed, driven by the very best evidence and standards of care.

Hospitals would be required to have interdisciplinary, interprofessional quality committees that would report to the board on quality-related issues. These quality committees would develop improvement plans that support better patient care. Every organization would have quality improvement plans that are publicly posted. This would help hospitals work toward expressly stated goals that would ultimately make them better at what they do. It would also inform patients, families and the community about what hospitals are doing to improve the delivery of care.

Executive compensation would be linked to whether or not the organization achieved the results in those plans. I'm very pleased that hospital executives are embracing the proposed changes. In fact, Bob Bell, the CEO of the University Health Network, strongly supported the recommendations by speaking at the press conference to launch this proposed legislation. From the very top down, through every level of the organization, there would be a continuous focus on quality, a culture shift that would drive better patient care. The improvement plan would hold hospital leadership accountable for delivering on that plan.

To make the process more transparent, there would be a patients relations process in every hospital to address complaints and concerns, as well as regular patient, client, caregiver and staff surveys. The results of these surveys would be used to inform the annual quality improvement plans. This would give patients and their families as well as those who work in hospitals greater input into shaping quality improvements in hospitals. Patients would be very much a part of this quality improvement dialogue. Patients, the users of the system, would have a voice in how it is run. That is what this is all about: Greater empowerment for patients so that their system can serve them better.

There are many examples of individual efforts of quality improvement in the system, and there is no shortage of dedicated and committed health professionals and organizations in Ontario. I won't list them all. I do want, however, to thank the health care leaders for embracing the challenges and working with us to improve quality care.

What I believe has been lacking is a standard where quality and value are an absolutely integral part of everyone's job. As a way to expand quality consistency throughout the system, the proposed bill would also expand the mandate of the Ontario Health Quality Council. I think this is a very important element of the bill. It would enable the council to provide recommendations on the evidence-based delivery of health care based on clinical practice guidelines. The council would also make recommendations on possible changes to the way health care is covered and paid for to ensure that what we pay for reflects the best available evidence.

For Ontarians, this legislation means that we want to keep paying for things that improve outcomes for patients. The reality is that poor-quality care, inefficient care, is expensive care. When someone is readmitted to the hospital because they did not receive the proper care upon their discharge, that is expensive care and it is poor-quality care for that patient.

So it all comes down to putting patients first. It comes down to delivering our best to them today in a way that will allow the health system to be there for future generations. Let's remember that waste and inefficiency are what is costly. Quality and value go hand in hand.

The proposed Excellent Care for All Act is a necessary first step in achieving these imperatives. I sincerely believe that the future of our health care system in Ontario depends on it. I urge my colleagues to join with me in passing this important piece of legislation.

I do want to conclude my remarks by thanking the extraordinary people in the Ministry of Health who have worked very, very hard to bring this idea, this aspiration, to reality today. A lot of people have worked very hard to develop this, and I give them my sincere thanks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? It does go in rotation, so the honourable member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I appreciate the opportunity here. I'm just using a few moments to put on the record the fact that I've met with our local hospitals with regard to not specifically this, but it was mentioned in the meetings that I had at Port Perry hospital as well as the Uxbridge hospital, and we want to put that on the record.

Our member from Kitchener–Waterloo will be speaking, and having been the Minister of Health, she has a pretty good insight into what's expected.

I would say from the beginning that everyone would agree with the premise or principle or objective of quality in our hospitals. We would expect that it exists already. The structure is the second part of it, the quality organization being set up. I would have expected, when I look at the sunshine list in hospitals, that most of those patient-based outcomes and CIHI—the Canadian Institute for Health Information—reporting would have presumed that some sort of outcome-based process exists

today. To find out now that the minister is just putting this in place would give one of the impression that maybe some of the outcomes aren't accountable. I don't know.

She said she has the support of the hospital association, which I think is very important.

I'm wondering: Does she have the support of the Ontario Medical Association, the doctors? I want to put on the record that a couple of the doctors I met with informed me that they had concerns about their role on the board and the fact that they may not be entitled to vote on some of the things. They can participate on the board. I recall talking to Dr. Steve Gray, who is a very well-respected practitioner in Port Perry. He also serves on the Lakeridge Health board, and as such, he knows of what he speaks.

I would expect that this would be reviewed. This is third reading, unfortunately, and time-allocated.

I want to put on the record the final thing. The measurement I have, in the practical sense of just a person representing constituents in the riding of Durham, is that almost all of the hospitals in my jurisdiction are in a state of trauma. All around me, the hospitals are in trauma. Almost all of them are suffering from a lack of human and physical resources.

I look at the member from Peterborough, Jeff Leal. It's tragic that we're having public meetings on the hospital. Yesterday, I heard from the coalition from Northumberland Hills Hospital—Lou Rinaldi. They should be up in arms about what is going on here. This is a distraction from the point of view—

Mr. Bob Delaney: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I respect the opinion of my colleague from Durham, who is a very well -poken member, and I do remind him that it is not practice to refer to members in the assembly by name but by riding.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): He did both. He referred to the honourable member by riding and then his name.

The honourable member for Durham has the floor.

Mr. John O'Toole: I was looking at the Northumberland Hills Hospital and the Peterborough Regional Health Centre. I also want to mention that Uxbridge hospital is going through a similar challenge for human resources. Port Perry hospital this week, it's my understanding, because of the lack of resources, is also in a state of siege.

0920

Certainly, we agree entirely with the principal objective of quality, patient-centred care. What do I see? I see the LHINs increasing expenditures and yet reducing front-line services in the hospitals. That's what I see. That's the evidence.

Despite the rhetoric from the minister here this morning, health care is in paralysis, in cardiac arrest. That's the reality across this province. We've had reports from autopsies and other kinds of reports about the outcome-based situation in our hospitals. The young person who died in Niagara because they were diverted from a hospital where the emergency was closed and died on the way to the other hospital—that's the reality, and I've heard it day after day after day.

I want the people of Ontario to know that they have increased funding to the bureaucracy in health care: LHINs. Now they're setting up this health quality council, which I presume already exists. Outcome-based in hospitals is what it's about. I think this is a disguise, personally. I support the objective but I'm suspicious.

Part of this section of Bill 46—I looked at it. It says right here: "Health care organizations are required to develop a quality improvement plan...." Of course they are. And this is the key part to it: Is it going to affect executive compensation? I hope the reporting is honest.

With that, I'll leave the rest of the comments to our critic and a person who is highly respected, Ms. Witmer from Kitchener–Waterloo.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I also will leave most of the time to our health critic, France Gélinas, who will be here shortly.

What I wanted to contribute to the debate, really, was about health care generally. As a party, of course, of medicare and of Tommy Douglas, this hits close to the hearts of New Democrats everywhere.

There are two ways of killing a health care system: One is slashing and burning, closing hospitals willy-nilly; the other is by nibbling at the edges, by delisting bit by bit, letting nurses go, letting the bureaucracy take over, not paying bills when bills are due. The classic case in my own riding is Four Villages health centre, which, completely under this ministry, was promised when opening a satellite—and, of course, I think we would all agree here that community health centres provide some of the best medical care. They're interdisciplinary teams, they're relatively inexpensive—certainly far less expensive than hospital care—and they have doctors on salaries. It's the kind of model that New Democrats love. This particular one opened a satellite because they're so busy. They already have a waiting list. They were promised money by this government. In fact, when checking with various folks in the Ministry of Health, they were told that the cheques had been processed. But have the cheques ever arrived? No. Numerous calls; my office has been calling. Meanwhile, the question is, how do they pay their staff? How do they pay their rent? How do they pay their utilities? That's the kind of ship that's being run across the aisle here.

Look at the delisting of services that has happened out of the McGuinty Liberals. No longer do we get eye exams covered by OHIP. Is that not an essential health service? No longer do we get physio paid for by OHIP. Is that not an essential health service? No longer do we have ambulances paid for. I ask you, is an ambulance ride to the hospital not an essential service? This is chipping away at the core of our health care, not to mention the closing of emergency wards, not to mention the letting go of nurses, and not to mention, which would horrify the average Ontarian, the huge salaries taken away from the taxpayer base by some of our CEOs.

Our leader, Andrea Horwath, brought in a bill to cap civil servant salaries at twice what Dalton McGuinty makes, twice what the Premier makes. And let's remember, these are not people who have to reapply for their job every four years; these are people who have contracts that make the average MPP drool. They have pension plans, they have built-in clauses that give them payouts when they leave, and they earn more than twice as much as our Premier. There's something wrong with that system. There's something very wrong with that. This is valuable health care money that's not spent on patients, not on putting patients first, but on putting bureaucrats first. So there's that.

I know that in my riding there are many, many people who do not have family doctors, who can't get access. This is true of hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who do not have access to a primary-care GP. Where do they go? Guess what? They tend to go to emergency wards to get primary care. This is the most inefficient, expensive way of delivering health care. Yet we have foreign-trained professionals—I have several in my riding; I'm sure we all do—who are working far beneath their potential because it takes them an average of 10 years to get accredited. I have one surgeon in my riding who goes back to Iran for six months every year because he can't get a job here. That's how he pays for staying here. He is in his 40s. He doesn't want to spend another 10 years in school going through the process. He doesn't have that kind of money and doesn't have that kind of time. Yet we desperately need him. We need doctors. Doctors aren't forthcoming.

And of course there's the much-ballyhooed dental plan. Remember, this is the McGuinty Liberal government that promised a dental program. We can't even get physio or eye exams, but they promised a dental program. Do we have a dental program? Absolutely.

Here is the situation: The problems are myriad. This bill is not going to address them. I'm going to leave the balance of the time for my colleague from Nickel Belt, who will be here shortly. But suffice it to say that what the McGuinty Liberals have done on their watch is to chip away at the foundation of medicare in this province. It's sad; it's not stopping, and we as New Democrats—remember, the party of medicare—are appalled by it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I rise in the House today to speak to Bill 46, our proposed Excellent Care for All Act, at this third reading. It was my privilege to attend the Standing Committee on Justice Policy hearings on this bill to hear the submissions by individuals and many of our partners, such as the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ontario Medical Association and the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, to just name a few. We also received input from my colleagues across the way, the member from Nickel Belt and the member from Whitby–Oshawa.

I was heartened to hear that for the most part, the vast majority of partners were supportive of what we're aiming to achieve with this landmark legislation to improve the quality and value of the province's health care system by putting patients first and enhancing accountability, thereby ensuring that the system will be there for future generations.

I'd like now to acknowledge and thank all the individuals and groups for making written submissions or coming forward with their thoughtful ideas. The commitment to improving the province's health care system is undeniable. Like all Ontarians, they want to ensure that quality patient care is job one for everyone who works in health care and that the system provides value for every dollar spent.

In response to some of the recommendations we heard both at the committee hearings and through written submissions, the committee passed motions to amend the proposed legislation. For example, in response to similar recommendations from the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ontario Medical Association, and the Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences to not require health care organizations to survey employees every year to avoid survey fatigue, we put forward an amendment to require organizations to survey employees at least once every two fiscal years.

In response to a recommendation from Trillium health care, the committee amended the bill to acknowledge the work that some hospitals have already done to develop a patient declaration of values after consulting with the public.

The bill was also amended to require every health care organization to provide a copy of its annual quality improvement plan to the Ontario Health Quality Council in a format established by the council that permits reporting on a minimum set of quality indicators.

We wish to thank Cancer Care Ontario for appearing before the committee and for their suggested amendment, and our colleagues from the NDP for moving that amendment.

0930

Following the recommendation of the Ontario Nurses' Association, the committee amended the bill on our government's motion to ensure that in appointing members of the Ontario Health Quality Council, consideration would be given to selecting experts in the creation of safe, quality and healthy work environments. Similarly, based on advice from Cancer Care Ontario, the bill was amended to give consideration to selecting experts in clinical service evaluation and quality improvement. This change will strengthen the composition of the council at this very critical juncture.

The bill was also amended on the motion of our Progressive Conservative colleague to ensure that past board members and executives of health care organizations were not precluded from being considered to serve on the council—an important clarification to the bill. The committee also came together with unanimous consent to approve an important amendment suggested by the Ontario Hospital Association that was necessary to clarify a

potential conflict between a new provision in the bill and an existing investigation provision.

We've been very responsive to our partners and opposition colleagues, and I believe the amendments that were made by the committee make the legislation much stronger.

Let me now turn to why this legislation is so urgently needed. Recently, you may have heard about a population projection report by Statistics Canada. According to that report, the population of over-65s will more than double, from 4.7 million in 2009 to between 9.9 million and 10.9 million by 2036. Seniors will surpass children aged 14 and under between 2015 and 2021. If left unchecked, in 12 years, 70 cents of every dollar spent by the provincial government will be on health care. Governments must prepare to meet these pressures on the health care system.

The proposed Excellent Care for All Act would do just that. It would lay the groundwork for a significant culture shift in this province's health care system, a culture shift that must take place if the system on which we all rely is to be there in the future and to be sustainable. Not only can we not keep spending at the current rate, we must tie increases in spending to improvements in quality.

If this legislation passes, significant changes would begin to take effect in our health care system. Health care organizations, beginning with hospitals, would all have interprofessional quality committees that would report to the board of directors on quality-related issues. Every organization would have quality improvement plans publicly posted, and executive compensation would be linked to the achievement of outcomes identified in those plans. This is a very important component of this bill that would bring about a systemic focus on quality that would permeate the organization and would eventually drive better patient care.

We also moved forward in a staged approach with several additional policies that will shift the focus in health care in Ontario onto quality and value. We would gradually reform how hospitals are funded to better align funding with efficient delivery of high-quality patient care—to ensure, in other words, that the money follows the patient. This is an absolutely necessary step. At present, the global funding system does not support quality improvement and it does not reward the efficient provision of health care. We believe that the system needs to be improved.

Before I close, I want to thank some of the stakeholders who attended committee: Mr. Jeff MacDonald from LifeLabs Medical Laboratory Services; Dr. Bob Haig from the Ontario Chiropractic Association; Ms. Katrina Kilroy from the Association of Ontario Midwives; Mr. Terrence Sullivan from Cancer Care Ontario; Dr. Mark MacLeod, Ontario Medical Association; and Mr. Tom Closson from the Ontario Hospital Association.

This proposed Excellent Care for All Act is a reflection of this government's strong commitment to the future of health care in Ontario. I would urge all my colleagues in the Legislature to support this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm pleased to join the debate, the final opportunity we have to speak to Bill 46, the Excellent Care for All Act. I don't know how anybody could not support this, but I think we also have to recognize that what is being suggested here is certainly not going to be the answer to all of the problems that are plaguing our health system today.

The reality is, the health system in the province of Ontario is not sustainable. It is growing at an average annual pace of 8%, and without changes to the system, the current 46% of funding that goes to the health system will be 80% of total program spending in 20 years. It will leave little money for other priorities such as education, social services, public safety, transportation, culture etc. Obviously, Ontario is not going to be able to bear that burden. We have a looming crisis in public health care costs, and we need to address that issue.

This bill, in part, addresses the issue, but anybody who thinks this is going to solve the issue would be badly mistaken. Part of the reason, of course, for the increased costs in our health care system is because of our growing population, our aging population, increasing costs of technology, and increasing drug costs. One other component that I think is really important is the increased incidence of overweight and obesity and the decreasing fitness levels that we're seeing in our province today.

If you take a look at the aging population, I think this is an area where we need to be concerned. The boomer tsunami is going to hit us, and we've already heard that the senior population is going to double by 2036. We're going to outnumber children for the first time, and we're obviously going to see an increase in medical spending. CIHI tells us that in 2009, when we spent an average of $3,800 for those under the age of 64, those over 80 consumed $17,500. So health costs are going to go only in one direction. They are not sustainable.

I'm going to come back to the aging population, because although the government has introduced Bill 46, which they say they want to do because they want to make sure that accessible care is going to be available for all patients throughout the province of Ontario, I just want to emphasize that this is not going to go anywhere in meeting the need for change that is so imperative. There is much more in the way of critical change that is going to be necessary.

I support the bill, as far as the bill goes. A lot of it is paperwork. A lot of it is going to involve health care stakeholders. The public really isn't aware of this bill, and probably, at the end of the day, they don't care that much about it other than to want to know that the health care that they need is going to be accessible to them and that the best quality of care is going to be provided. I think all people in the province today want to make sure that whatever services are provided, they're getting the best value for their taxes. Insofar as this bill moves in that direction, it's a bill that we certainly can support. At the end of the day, of course, we want to do everything

we can to make sure that patients in this province get the best outcomes possible. This bill is going to be really looking at evidence-based health care and the best clinical practices.

I'm glad that the RNAO was involved in making some changes to the bill. They have long been supporters of evidence-based practice. Of course, we're going to see an expansion of the Ontario Health Quality Council as well.

However, I think it's important to recognize that what this government has never done since 2003—and what was promised by the former Minister of Health, Mr. Smitherman—is a health plan, a 10-year plan for health. There was going to be a determination of where it was we needed to go, who the demographic was going to be that we were trying to serve and what the needs of that demographic were going to be. Hopefully, we would have then seen a strategy as to how we could achieve those goals and meet those needs, and then also measurements on a yearly basis to see that we were achieving those goals. That would have also gone a long way to achieving quality; to achieving cost-effectiveness, value for money; to improving access to care and making sure that the appropriate services are available to patients in the province of Ontario.

0940

That's where this bill falls short. That's where this government falls short, because you can introduce this Excellent Care for All Act which, as I said, really is based on a lot of paper reporting of different measurements and best practices, but we have a problem in our hospitals that we're not addressing, and that is the alternative-level-of-care patients. This government has never developed a plan to deal with the aging population who are languishing in our hospital beds, for whom we are paying the cost of an acute care bed when they should be more appropriately looked after either in a long-term-care bed, in the community elsewhere or getting home support. But we don't have those services available, and so they end up in our hospitals, sometimes for weeks, sometimes for six months, because there's no place for them to go. They're driving up the costs in our health care system.

Unfortunately, Ontario has amongst the largest percentage of alternative-level-of-care patients in all of Canada. There are alternative-level-of-care patients in somewhat less than 20% of our beds in our hospitals through this province. Some hospitals have fewer, some hospitals have more. But these beds are occupied by people, primarily seniors, who should be in other beds—and I can tell you that a hospital setting is not where you want to be, because we know that in hospitals there are infections. Unfortunately, some of these individuals do contract these infections. They actually become more sick than when they came into the hospital and, on occasion, when we've had some of the epidemics, some of the people have actually unfortunately not returned home or to any other setting.

In my own community, when I took a look at the number of alternative-level-of-care beds at Grand River hospital in March, they had an average of 75 people in these beds on a daily basis. That is a lot of people. I know Cambridge hospital, which has had a lot of financial problems and challenges, suffers from the same problem. Think of the cost of keeping someone in a hospital bed versus the cost of keeping somebody in a long-term-care bed, in another community setting or in home care.

The other problem that you have in the hospitals is that if you have these people in the acute care hospital beds, it means that people who are looking to have surgery can't have surgery. So we see delays in surgeries; we see backlogs; we see doctors who have booked surgery and then can't move forward with the surgery, the reason being that there are no beds available for the people who have the surgery. The other problem you have, of course, is in your emergency rooms. You have people coming into the emergency rooms and, of course, there's no bed for them because you have the alternative-level-of-care patient occupying that bed.

In this province today, because of the fact that the government up until now has basically relied on the 20,000 beds that our government announced in 1998 to meet the needs of those who need a long-term-care bed—we just aren't seeing a plan for more beds. Yet, we have 25,000 people ostensibly waiting for a long-term-care bed. In my own community, I've been told there are somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1,500.

So this is great; this bill before us is great. But, believe me, it is a small step, and it is a lot of paperwork. It will certainly help in the development of ensuring that quality care is improved, and it will hopefully help to make sure that we're becoming more cost-efficient. Hopefully it will increase accessibility. But unless you address the other problems in the health care system and break the back of this alternative-level-of-care problem that we see everywhere to ensure that people get the most appropriate care in the most appropriate setting at the best cost, you're not going to solve the problems in the hospitals.

Hospitals are having challenges. They're doing everything they can. They even close emergency rooms at certain times of the year. We've seen that in the past seven years, when this government has been in place. They've eliminated a lot of outpatient services and a lot of other services, and people in the community have been left looking for the services that no longer are in the hospitals. But we have to develop a common approach to capacity planning throughout the hospitals and throughout the province, because hospitals simply can't meet the demands today. The community care system is stretched, the long-term-care system is stretched, and the demographic tsunami that we've talked about has not even hit.

The other part of the puzzle that we need to address if we're going to reduce health care costs is that we really do need to focus and address the issue of obesity. This is a very alarming problem. Take a look at 1981 to the present—there was a report done by Statistics Canada. It says that our fitness levels have declined and our waist sizes have increased. This is putting us at greater risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma,

cancer and arthritis. They tell us that 17% of the children are overweight and 9% are obese. That is alarming. They say that 38% of adults today are at a healthy weight while 62% are overweight or obese. Again, this puts all of us at risk of health problems that are very expensive for the health system. They're also telling us now that the children born today aren't going to live as long as we do. We have to tackle that problem if we're going to tackle the problem of making sure that our health system is there for us tomorrow.

We have the bill in front of us today, Bill 46, the Excellent Care for All Act. I support it, but it is only a small part of what needs to happen. I would strongly recommend that this government focus on the development of a long-term-care plan: Identify the long-term-care needs, identify your population, and identify the solutions to address the problems. Let's move forward, because this, today, is only a small, small part of what is necessary. In fact, it's maybe a little bit of window dressing, and we have not addressed the real problem. The fact is, health costs are unsustainable. We need to have a debate; we need to address them. That debate, that discussion, should start now, and I would encourage the government to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

M^me^ France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to add a few words for this third reading of Bill 46, the Excellent Care for All Act.

First of all, I agree with the basic principle of the bill. If we focus on quality, if we put everything that is going on in the health care system through a quality lens, we have the possibility to effect immense changes for the better. The health quality council, as we are talking here in the Legislature, is presenting their report. Health quality council: Their name says it all. They look at the quality of the health care services that are delivered here in Ontario. They have great suggestions for change. They identified opportunities where if we change the way we do things, it would improve quality. It would improve outcomes. It would improve client satisfaction with our health care system.

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The bill basically tries to do this. The problem is that a lot of it is left to regulation. Believe it or not, there are groups of health care workers out there that really like the way they are doing things, really believe that what they are doing is helping their patients and are very reluctant to change. In order to facilitate change in an environment like this, you need strong levers, and to me, quality is something that resonates with every health care worker. Every health care worker wants to offer good-quality care to their patients. If you can give them those tools, you are in a position to effect change.

The NDP has brought forward dozens of changes to make this bill stronger, to make sure that all of the levers are there to really take advantage of the humongous possibility for improvement that quality can afford the people of Ontario. Unfortunately, all but one of our amendments were turned down. What we have now is a bill that could do great things, that is a first step toward doing great things, or that could fizzle and do nothing, because a lot of what the bill will do will only be clear once the regulations are written up.

When the regulations are written up, members of the opposition have very little input into this. But I can tell you that some really well-organized lobby groups within the health care system will be able to influence those regulations. If they see this as infringing on their turf, they could be successful in making sure that what has the potential to help millions of Ontarians will fizzle out and basically do very little.

We had made recommendations such as that the quality plan that each and every one of the hospitals—and I hope soon every health care organization in Ontario—puts forward should be right next to the Ontario Health Quality Council assessment of how this hospital is doing. If you have an assessment of when they are following best practices and when they are meeting quality outcomes, and you have this assessment done by the health quality council—which, by the way, is very good at what they do. They are very good at assessing what is quality, how do you measure it, how do you seek it and how do you define it. They do a very good job. Let's put in a page that says, "Here's how the hospital fared," and they can compare themselves to their peers. Let's see how every health care organization fares and let them compare themselves to their peers. But let's also have the quality plan for that hospital or that health care organization right next to it so that you can see results. But when we brought forward amendments that would mandate public accountability, that would mandate that those public documents be made available and be tied together, those were turned down. There's hesitation on the part of the government to do both steps. So we have a bill that could turn out to be good or could turn out to do very little more than collect dust like a lot of other work that has been done and like a lot of other reports and bills end up doing.

There are things that we know need to happen. We talk about interdisciplinary care. The government, to their honour, have put forward 150 family health teams. Family health teams are described as interdisciplinary care, where physicians work together with nurse practitioners, nurses, dietitians and social workers. Every health care professional gets to work to their full scope of practice so that they can take on those 750,000 people in Ontario who do not have access to primary care and so that you can have access to the right provider at the right time and decrease wait times. All of the mandate is good.

But when you look into the implementation of it, you see some of the power struggles at play. You see that in a team, you should have a physician, a nurse, a nurse practitioner, a social worker, a dietitian—let's say, a four-, five-, six-person team. That makes sense. It's easy to work with; communication is easy. But that's not what we see in family health teams. In family health teams we see a dyad: For every physician, there is one other health professional.

You see how sometimes the intentions are good. They say the right thing. They say that they want interdisciplinary care, but the doing falls short. This bill follows this path of putting forward great ideas that have the potential to do great things but then leaving the implementation to a date to be determined, by people to be determined and by regulations that I'm hoping will come out really soon and will be very good, but we have no assurance of that. "Excellent care for all" could turn out to do just that: fizzle out.

This bill drastically changes and augments the mandate of the health quality council. This is something that New Democrats support. We really believe that putting in a quality lens has the possibility to move things. But when we look at their mandate—for reasons completely unknown to me, when the health quality council did its first report and asked the people of Ontario what they thought quality should be made out of, they had nine items, and I'll read them to you. It goes as such: "The nine attributes that Ontarians tell us reflect a high-performing health system include: accessible"—makes sense—"effective, safe, patient-centred, equitable, efficient, appropriately resourced"—that makes sense to me—"integrated, and focused on population health." All of this makes sense.

The health quality council is putting forward its fifth report. It's all good. But now, you see, there's a little wee change that has happened. Those nine principles are still there, but "appropriately resourced" has been taken out. It now says only "appropriate."

You've heard my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo talk, saying that the hospitals in her area were strapped for cash; 50% of the community hospitals are strapped for cash. The government, by a change of a word in legislation, takes out "appropriately resourced," takes out "resourced" and only keeps "appropriate." That, to me, raises a red flag.

You have drastically improved and added to the mandate of the health quality council to bring this quality lens, but you have taken away their mandate to look at resources. To me, that makes no sense.

They have done their work. They've done a good job for the last five years, and they have looked at appropriately resourced health care. That means that if we're not achieving quality because of resources, they say so. It is part of their mandate and this is what they do. But now the government has taken one word out; they have taken "resourced" out. So if the health quality council finds that you cannot achieve quality because part of the system, such as the hospital system, is under-resourced, it's not part of their mandate anymore. They cannot report on that anymore. To me, this is a step backward, not forward.

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Another thing that we tried really hard to change is that the focus of the health quality council will be on publicly funded care. We all know that lots of publicly funded procedures have been delisted, whether we talk about optometry care, chiropractic care or community-based physiotherapy care. A lot of these have been delisted. Now we have a new mandate for the health quality council that says, "You shall only look at publicly funded services." So it doesn't matter if best practice—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I would just ask the honourable members to whisper. It's getting quite noisy and the speaker has indicated that she's been distracted by that, so please respect that the honourable member for Nickel Belt has the floor.

The honourable member for Nickel Belt.

M^me^ France Gélinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can talk very loud if I have to.

Another thing we wanted to change is that we wanted to make sure that the best practices that are developed do not only focus on medication, operations and surgery. We wanted to include all of the determinants of health. We wanted to include parts of health that are not funded by the public health care system, such as chiropractic care.

Let me give you an example. Lots of people, unfortunately, are involved in motor vehicle accidents. Whiplash, where you hurt your neck, happens frequently. The best practice will tell you that a chiropractor has a role to play for whiplash injury patients. But now, with Bill 46, the health quality council won't be looking at chiropractic care because they are not funded under the public health system.

For us, we wanted every health care practitioner who is under HPRAC, who is registered by the province of Ontario, who is recognized as a health care professional in Ontario, to be included in the mandate of the health quality council so that when they look at best practice, they don't only look at the part of the system that is funded, they look at all of the professionals who are regulated by professional colleges in Ontario and provide quality care to people. That won't happen. Their mandate has been narrowed. Like it has been narrowed to not look at resources, it has also been narrowed to not look at the practitioners who are not publicly funded. To me, again, this is a step in the wrong direction.

We've talked many times about the need to have interdisciplinary advisory committees in our hospital system. Right now, we have medical advisory committees that do as well as they can, but things have changed. Health care is now delivered by an interdisciplinary team, where more and more, the different professionals are allowed to work within their full scope of practice. But when we tried to bring those changes forward, they were not allowed.

I see that I only have a few seconds left on the clock. This bill, this focus on quality, has an opportunity to do great things. You put the focus on quality, you add a little bit of resources, you bring in transparency and accountability to the public, and I guarantee you that things will change for the better. This bill, unfortunately, is timid. We'll have to wait until the regulations are done to see if we will take the bold step that will mean drastic changes to the health care system in Ontario for the better, and the curbing of the ever-increasing expenses in health care

toward quality. But at least we will be supporting this bill because it does no harm.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 1, 2010, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Matthews has moved third reading of Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1005 to 1010.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Ms. Matthews has moved third reading of Bill 46, An Act respecting the care provided by health care organizations. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine
Albanese, Laura	Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John
Arnott, Ted	Elliott, Christine	Mitchell, Carol
Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Gerretsen, John	Murray, Glen R.
Balkissoon, Bas	Gélinas, France	Naqvi, Yasir
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	O'Toole, John
Bentley, Christopher	Hoskins, Eric	Pendergast, Leeanna
Best, Margarett	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bisson, Gilles	Jeffrey, Linda	Prue, Michael
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Rick	Pupatello, Sandra
Broten, Laurel C.	Klees, Frank	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Kormos, Peter	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Kular, Kuldip	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Carroll, Aileen	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Tabuns, Peter
Chiarelli, Bob	Levac, Dave	Takhar, Harinder S.
Clark, Steve	Marchese, Rosario	Van Bommel, Maria
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 66; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It being just about 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we will have question period.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I draw members' attention to the Speaker's gallery. Visiting from Bangladesh for the Bangladesh Expo 2010 is Liton Dwan, a notable and renowned spiritualist, along with Georgina Bencsik, chair of the Canada Bangladesh Business Council, and Mohammed Hossain, vice-chair. Please welcome them.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'd like to again introduce guests of page Tristen Groves: his mother, Vicki Lavine-Groves, grandmother Lottie Lavine and friend Alan Blumberger.

Also joining us shortly is Dr. Karen Somerville, president of Canadians for Properly Built Homes, and 30 homeowners, members of that organization across the province.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I just want to remind all members that today is the cattlemen's barbecue from 12 to 2. Thank you to the cattlemen for another fantastic barbecue, and welcome to all the cattlemen who are able to attend today. I would ask for unanimous consent to wear our Canadian beef symbol.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I also want to introduce my intern from the University of Toronto and the lovely riding of Huron–Bruce: Catherine Simpson. Catherine, stand up.

We also have in attendance Bette Jean Crews, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Welcome, everyone.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: On behalf of page Joshua Rossetti from the riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I want to introduce his father, Fabio Rossetti, his sister, Olivia Rossetti, and his grandmother, Tina Rossetti, who have joined us here in the galleries today to celebrate his last day as page here in the Ontario Legislature.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Among many other interns is Maggie Conway, who's here today. She's the daughter of one of my good friends, Kim Donaldson. We're delighted to have her here today.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'd like to introduce two people who are working in my office as interns: Maria Naser, who comes from Markham, and Tim Crjlenica, who comes from Windsor. A special welcome today. They're doing a great job in the office of the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Michael Chan: I would like to introduce to the House our summer interns. They're all talented individuals with a keen interest in government business. Please welcome Christina Cedric, Eric Pegolo and Goind Grewal. Welcome.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm just looking to see if she's here yet. Rhett Figliuzzi is one of our pages from our riding who's having his last day here. His mom is here to witness the last day. Welcome, Cheryl, but I'm not sure where she is.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I don't believe they're here yet, but I want to introduce two wonderful community advocates for seniors from Don Valley West: Edna Beange, who's a former city councillor for East York—I know the member for Beaches–East York knows her very well—and Peg Holloway. Both are on my seniors' advisory council, and they help me stay informed of seniors' issues in the riding. I want to welcome them when they come in.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I hope the member for Thornhill will forgive me here. I'm going to introduce a class from

his riding. The teacher is a very good friend of mine, so that's why I'm doing it. Joe Bush is the teacher, and the class is from Our Lady of the Rosary in Thornhill. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce—he's not here yet—the intern in my office: Gian Mele from the city of Sarnia and the riding of Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to welcome to the House summer student Ashleigh Patton, who is working in my office for the summer.

I want to just express the appreciation also of my staff for the good work that they've done over the last session: Dr. Alex Roman, Suzanne Bolton and Neave Greig. We couldn't do our work in this place without the support of our staff, and I want to acknowledge them today.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I would like to welcome the grandmother and grandfather of page Sarah Klapman. In the members' gallery are Arlene Klapman and Sam Klapman. Welcome.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I would like to welcome to the Legislature today, from the great riding of Scarborough–Rouge River, the students from Albert Campbell Collegiate Institute and their teacher, Ms. Kim.

Hon. James J. Bradley: The interns, as you know, do a great job for us, as do staff. I'd like to introduce Leo Lehman, Nick Gallant and Mark Downard.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): From my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, I'd like to welcome the group from St. Anthony Catholic French Immersion School, which is visiting Queen's Park today. They'll be joining us later this morning in the Speaker's gallery.

APPOINTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a copy of the order in council reappointing Gord Miller as the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario effective May 19, 2010.

APPOINTMENT OF OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a copy of an order in council reappointing André Marin as Ombudsman of Ontario effective June 1, 2010.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier criticized the cost of Ontario hosting the G20, saying, "I have the same reaction as Canadians do—a billion dollars is a lot of money."

How soon the Premier forgets his summer of scandal. In eHealth alone, the McGuinty Liberals wasted a billion dollars on his office staff, a Liberal campaign chair and a host of other Liberal-friendly consultants.

Was the Premier trying to be ironic or was his comment on the cost of hosting the G20 an attempt to draw attention away from the fact that in just 28 days, his greedy $3-billion HST will grab more money from the pockets of seniors and families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I always appreciate the positive, constructive suggestions coming from the other side. Perhaps that's no real surprise.

I wanted to take the opportunity today to talk a little bit about the things we've been doing for and on behalf of Ontario families. They've been concerned especially about the economy, jobs and their own household expenses. We started by cutting taxes; in fact, eliminating from the tax roll the 90,000 lowest-income families. We've created a new Ontario sales tax credit, $260 each for adults and children, which will benefit 2.9 million Ontarians. We have a new Ontario property tax credit, $250 for non-seniors, $625 for seniors. That will benefit 2.9 million families and individuals in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Mr. Speaker, through you again to the Premier: It's obvious that the Premier chooses to forget the summer of scandal and the $1-billion amount that was wasted on eHealth.

Earlier this week, the auditor told us how you had taken money out of the pockets again of seniors and families. OLG wasted millions on luxury suites, resorts, spas and even paintball, but OLG executives today still enjoy the same allowances and the same expense accounts. According to the auditor, the Premier could have taken action over two years ago. The OLG actually wrote him and asked to be exempted—if you can believe it—from the Management Board of Cabinet rules, but the Premier couldn't be bothered to reply.

So I say to you, do seniors and families have to pay the HST because there was no oversight of the agencies, or you just couldn't say no to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to take the opportunity to thank the auditor for the work that he did for us at OLG. We asked them to come in, and he did come in. My honourable colleague knows that we have changed the rules. The auditor reported on events that occurred before the rule changes had been put in place, and again I thank him for his work.

Moving beyond that, I also want to take the opportunity to remind my honourable colleague about some of the things we've done, which they continue to stand against. We're reducing the price of generic drugs by 50%; they stand against that. We've signed an agreement with Samsung bringing 16,000 jobs and four manufacturing plants to Ontario; they stand against that. We're creating a new northern Ontario energy credit to benefit northern Ontario families, who have some extraordinarily higher costs when it comes to energy; they stand against

that. We also brought into place new pension reform that will be especially helpful to people who lose their jobs in the province of Ontario; again, that is something that they stand against.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Again to the Premier: We've had the billion-dollar eHealth scandal, we've had the scandal at OLG, and if that's not enough, we know of another scandal that continues to unfold. The Ombudsman investigated complaints about waste at the Hamilton Niagara Local Health Integration Network and the Liberals tried to dump him. The unprecedented smear campaign against André Marin has backfired, but we're still waiting for an apology, someone to be held accountable for defaming him and, most importantly, the Ombudsman's report on waste at the LHIN to be released.

Whatever is it that is in the report that motivated you to scrap a public review of the LHINs until after the next election? Are you making seniors and families pay the HST—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: This is an extraordinary, complicated stretch. The HST is all about ensuring that we build a stronger economy for us today and for our children tomorrow. It's about 600,000 more jobs. It's about doing what every parent has always done—whatever they need to do to secure a bright future for their kids. That's simply what it's all about.

I want to once again take the opportunity to thank Ontario Conservatives, who have been relentless and enthusiastic in terms of their support for this particular initiative. I want to thank them for their commitment not to undo it should they earn the privilege of serving Ontarians in government. Last, I want to thank them by name: Ministers Flaherty, Ecker, Baird and Clement; John Tory, Mike Harris, Senator Runciman and, of course, Prime Minister Harper. They have all been very kind, assiduous and enthusiastic in terms of their support for a very important initiative.

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is also to the Premier. The truest scandal is that each and every hour of each and every day, Dalton McGuinty spends over $2 million more than he collects in revenue. At the current pace of overspending, he's on track to double the debt in just two short years. Are you making Ontario seniors and families pay your record sales tax increase because you can't control your record spending, Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Like governments around the world, when Ontario went into the downturn that we went into last year, we chose to spend 3% of gross domestic product to invest $32.7 billion in infrastructure and create and maintain some 300,000 jobs for Ontarians. That was the appropriate choice to make. That's what the federal government did, that's what the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Germany did.

What have the credit rating agencies said about Ontario? That in spite of the challenges, this province is in good shape and poised to come out of this downturn bigger, better and stronger than before. We will continue to invest in our communities and our people and create jobs for those who have suffered setbacks.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Why don't you just stand up and say, "My name is Dwight, and I have a spending problem"?

With Dalton McGuinty, scandal doesn't just happen. Wasteful overspending is all part of a master plan. Every other jurisdiction in Canada is pursuing aggressive deficit reduction plans that bring them back to balance within five years, but Dalton McGuinty ambles along planning eye-popping deficits for the next eight years. While he says the deficits and the HST are about schools, hospitals and jobs, he has not built any long-term-care beds, he is cutting nurses and independent pharmacies, and he has lost over 300,000 manufacturing sector jobs.

So why are Ontario seniors and families paying your greedy HST?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock, please.

Interjection: The Speaker's got a smile on his face.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I have a big smile on my face. I'd just ask the honourable members to come to order, please.

Minister of Finance?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Just over a year and a quarter ago, the government of Ontario stood and protected Chrysler and General Motors. General Motors announced just the other day another $245-million investment in the city of St. Catharines, which is so ably represented by the member for St. Catharines. That was the right thing to do. That will create jobs. That will pay benefits.

The challenges that our economy went through—we're starting to see nine consecutive months of growth in jobs. We still are not back to pre-recession levels but we're moving in that direction. We're moving faster. What do the private sector economists say? The private sector economists say that Canada will lead the world and that Ontario will lead Canada.

Unlike the member opposite, we believe in a strong future for this province. We believe in jobs. We will work to create more jobs and help—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order. I would remind those who are offering interjections, it's much more helpful if they're in their seats.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: The real scandal is that the HST doesn't even begin to fill the hole Dalton McGuinty keeps digging and digging for our children with his runaway spending. And it cannot be forgotten that he did not tell Ontario seniors and families about his record income tax increase—the so-called health tax—before he did it. He didn't tell them about his record sales tax increase—the HST—before he did it.

How worried should seniors and families be about the fact that the McGuinty Liberals are signalling plans to bring in a carbon tax, a water tax, road tolls, a second health tax and, according to his strategic adviser, Andrew Steele, a rate hike to the HST?

Interjection: And we're getting rid of puppies.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: And we're getting rid of puppies, yes.

What a flight of fancy that was.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Members will please come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I can arrange express flights for any member to get to Manitoba or Quebec, gladly.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Let me remind the member opposite of what the Conference Board of Canada says. It says that Ontario's economic rebound is being supported by public fiscal spending by the government of Ontario.

Let me remind the member opposite about what one of his colleagues, Mike Wallace from Burlington, said. Here's what Mike Wallace said: "As Conservatives, we're supportive of a combined tax.... It's not a tax grab.... That is a misnomer to mislead"—divert—"the public to get them excited about something that's not accurate."

He's talking about you, sir. He's telling you that you're not being completely candid with the people of Ontario.

What does that member's former leader say? "Conservatives are mad at me because I have acknowledged the comments made by organizations like the TD Bank ... that there are ... economic benefits to this planned HST, which there are."

I do not—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

New question?

1050

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Since we're in the mood for quoting from our past records here, on November 6, 2001, the then Leader of the Opposition stood in this place and said, "This government blew $1 billion on a publicity stunt and sent out $200 cheques." He later added, "The people of Ontario ... will not be fooled. They will see through this pretence. They'll see past the truckloads of their own money being thrown at them...."

Eight years ago, the Premier said people weren't fools. My question is this: After nearly seven years in office, are we to assume that he has now changed his mind?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to take the question. Again, I want to take the opportunity to thank the federal government. These are federal funds that are being distributed to Ontarians through the appropriate departments, and we think it's the responsible thing to do. The fact of the matter is that there will be a transition period until all the savings generated for businesses are passed on to consumers, and we think the fair thing to do is to pass these through to Ontario families.

They've taken a different approach in British Columbia. So be it. That's using their judgment. They thought that was the best thing to do. We bring a different perspective.

We could have kept the money, which I gather is what my honourable colleague is suggesting, that we keep the money as the government, but we felt the most appropriate thing and the fair thing to do was to pass this money on to consumers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government brags about the HST cheques being in the mail, but Ontario families are not being fooled, and they're telling me that every single day.

Deena Moggach says this: "The money he says we will get in the first year as a bribe will not help in the long run and again ... middle ... income people will suffer."

Jim McLeod calls the cheque a "bribe," and then asks, "What about next year and the year(s) after?"

Is the Premier's opinion of people really so low that he thinks that they're going to be impressed with a one-time bribe in return for a—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'll ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'd encourage my honourable colleague to speak with the chair of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, who said, "At the end of the day it's big-time savings for businesses and ultimately the consumer. We recognize this is a big challenge and a big step forward in how we do business, but it's an important step and probably one of the most important steps we've made over the last 10 to 15 years."

We've had a tremendous amount of support from others, not just the chair of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, but from Ken Lewenza. I know my honourable colleague will be familiar with Ken. Ken said, "I said to the Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath, 'Andrea, the harmonized sales tax ... cannot be an issue from the progressive side.'"

We have support from the CAW, from Ken Lewenza and organized labour across the province in favour of

this, because they know it creates jobs and it supports families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier can try to skirt the issue as much as he wants, but it's real Ontarians who actually get it.

Wayne Ellis writes this: "The ... 'gift' is a sad joke and will only help for the first year."

Rick Snowdon adds: "The [money] we may get from the government will not even begin to cover the extra expense that we will incur."

Does the Premier agree with himself that these cheques are nothing more than an expensive publicity stunt, or, after almost seven years in office, has he decided that he can fool the people?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: More and more, my honourable colleague is standing apart from her traditional supporters.

Gail Nyberg of the Daily Bread Food Bank said the following: "If you're a low-income Ontarian this is a positive budget, and I congratulate the government on recognizing that you can fight poverty and stimulate the economic scene at the same time."

Pat Capponi of the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction said, "This budget has moved the bar forward on housing, tax credits, and child benefits in ways that will make a tangible difference in the lives of many Ontarians."

People traditionally on the left are in support of our budget. They're in support of the package of tax reforms, and they're specifically in support of the HST because they know it's about building a stronger economy. They know it's about supporting our families both today and in the future.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. The Premier thinks people can be fooled with a cynical publicity stunt; New Democrats don't. The Premier thinks people should pay more while billions of dollars fly out the door on huge tax giveaways; New Democrats don't. The Premier thinks thousands of people who have spoken up against this unfair tax scheme should be completely ignored; New Democrats don't.

Why is this Premier refusing to listen to people across Ontario who are rejecting his cynical tax scheme and the cheques that come with it?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm a little bit surprised, because my honourable colleague has been saying for months now that she's concerned about the financial burden assumed by our families on a daily basis.

Here is an opportunity for us to work together, to pass along federal dollars through our treasury—it doesn't even come through our treasury; it comes directly from the federal government. They're going to send out cheques to go directly into the hands of our families, and my honourable colleague stands against that. I just don't understand how she can have it both ways. She wants to stand up for families, stand up for helping them address their financial challenges. Here's an opportunity for the federal government, pursuant to our direction, to send those cheques directly to families, and she stands against that.

I think I know where families stand on this. I think they want the help when it comes to these transitional payments. I think they're entitled to look forward to these benefits. I think they're going to put it to good use, especially during the course of this summer.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier doesn't need to remind me who I stand with; I know that quite clearly.

Here are some of the voices that the Premier is ignoring. Alice Cupa says this: "I'm scared"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would love an explanation as to why, when I stand up, it becomes so quiet; the moment I sit down, things just change.

Please continue.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here are some of the voices that the Premier continues to ignore. Alice Cupa says this: "I'm scared. Not only for myself, but my 87-year-old mother, who still lives alone in her own house.... She is just barely making ends meet. When gas [and] hydro ... taxes ... increase, she won't be able to stay at home."

Richard Halifax of Ottawa adds: "All I know is, it's going to cost me approximately $104 per month. I am still working at the age of 75. I live on a very tight budget.... guess I'll have to limit my haircuts from one a month to one every two months."

Does the Premier not realize that his unfair tax is forcing people to cut even the most simple and basic things in life—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague expresses what I can only gather to be sincere empathy for this particular individual, but why would she deprive her of her transition payment then? This is the purpose of this: to help ease all Ontario families through. Why would she stand against our Ontario sales tax credit: $260, which will benefit this individual every single year? What about our seniors' Ontario property tax credit: $625 for this individual? But my colleague opposes it. Then there's the senior homeowners' property tax grant, going up to $500 in 2010.

Why does my honourable colleague stand against these benefits that we're putting in place to help out Ontario seniors? I don't understand it, and I think, frankly, neither does the individual.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier is finally answering my first question; he obviously thinks he can still fool the people.

Wayne Moore says this: "I am a contractor, and on several occasions in the past four or five months I have

been asked to install HVAC equipment under the table. I won't do it, but others are installing equipment for cash. This is creating an underground market ... and is not helping business improve."

Keith Grant from London adds: "Our additional expenses will be about $50 a month."

With people worried about job security, their small businesses and their pay, why is the Premier about to hit them with such an unfair tax scheme?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: As the Minister of Finance said a moment ago, Ontario will be a national champion in terms of our economic growth this year. The Conference Board of Canada specifically said that. They said, as one of the significant contributing factors, the following: "Households will benefit from income tax cuts and from temporary sales tax transition benefits as the province moves to harmonize the provincial sales tax system with the federal goods and services tax."

The Conference Board of Canada is specifically stating that one of the reasons we're going to experience such tremendous growth, one of the reasons we're going to be a national champion in terms of the rate of our economic growth this year, is because of the package of tax reforms that we have put in place.

My colleague says she's concerned about economic opportunities and jobs. That's exactly why we're moving ahead with this package.

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TAXATION

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Premier. For all of Dalton McGuinty's talk about the HST creating jobs, he has said nothing about when Ontario seniors and families, who pay the tax, will see jobs created.

Yesterday we asked the Minister of Revenue at budget estimates when the first 60,000 HST jobs will be created. Surprisingly, he said, "Most of them have already been created." The families in northern Ontario, who haven't seen any job growth, wonder how a harmonized tax that hasn't happened yet could do this. Is it magic? Is it sleight of hand? Or is this just another example—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment, please.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdrawn.

Is this another example of how the McGuinty Liberals will say anything to get re-elected?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'm very pleased to stand up and address this question. The truth is that our companies which are creating products to sell around the world will reap huge benefits from this harmonized sales tax. In fact, at every single step along the way in their input costs they will see their costs decrease. That means that they will be more competitive. They will sell more goods. They will need to hire more people.

We know that this is going to work because it's worked in 140 countries. Even the other day, being up in the Ottawa area and speaking with the Tomlinson company—1,000 employees—these people can recognize the clear and present benefits of this initiative to people and jobs. That's what we need in this province as we come out of this recession. We—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Families in the north are interested in learning what kinds of jobs the HST will create in the years it will take to develop the Ring of Fire with your "oops" plan. According to Minister Wilkinson, they are "jobs of the future" and "the vast majority of jobs that our children are going to have today haven't ... been invented."

What does Dalton McGuinty's futuristic job invention machine look like? Are they sold here or just in Korea? Is it like a Samsung job invention machine, where you put in a billion dollars of subsidies and you get hot air out the other side?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Apparently, this particular member missed the terrific announcement this week in eastern Ontario, with—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Renfrew, member from Hamilton East, member from Durham.

Minister?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Let's be clear: Since last May, there have been 140,000 new jobs, this in an era when we have come out of the worst recession in 80 years.

But we're not stopping there. We are seeing companies investing today. Blast Freezers in eastern Ontario is creating jobs, recognizing that our tax policy makes Ontario the most competitive of any jurisdiction that we compete against in North America, and we're proud of that tax policy.

People need to work. People need jobs. You are prepared to sit there like a bunch of patsies while the world takes off around—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Members will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Please don't provoke them. Order.

The minister will withdraw the comment she made.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Ontarians living in poverty are anxiously awaiting the release of this government's so-called social assistance review report. We know that the report was submitted 17 days ago, but this

government still has not seen fit to release it. On May 18, I asked when Ontarians would receive the report. The Minister of Children and Youth Services said it was being translated. Why is this government waiting until the summer recess? Does it have something to hide?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you very much for the question. It's very appropriate to ask this question at this time.

The report will be released pretty soon. It's this group's report, so in order for us to release a report we have to make sure that it's translated and we have to make sure that it's accessible. I hope that the member is not suggesting here that we should issue reports that are not accessible to all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: Translation should not be an excuse. We agree that it needs to be translated, but we also think it should be put before this House when we're in session.

In March, the government terminated the special diet allowance, which helps low-income people with serious medical conditions buy nutritious food. This is of very serious concern to ISARC, which I met with yesterday, as did the Conservatives, but no Liberal came to talk about that.

The 25 in 5 network is demanding that no recipient of the allowance see an income reduction in the transition to the nutrition supplement program and that total funding available not be cut. Is one of the recommendations of the social assistance review council the reason that the government is burying this report until after the House recesses?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: My answer is absolutely not. We are very proud of what we have done, and we're working very closely with Gail Nyberg and this committee. I met with them a couple of times and I will be meeting with them again. I'm very pleased by the work that they have done so far and we will continue to work with them.

I'm very proud of what our government has done to help to reduce poverty. We will continue to work with the community and with my colleague responsible for poverty. We have invested money. We have raised social assistance by 12%. We have put forward the child benefit program—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TAXATION

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. Red tape is a huge burden to small businesses in Willowdale. I've met with a lot of small businesses in Willowdale and they asked me to ask the government to do two things. They say they face too much red tape in dealing with too many levels of government. They're dealing with red tape when they could be focusing on their businesses, growing their businesses, hiring new employees and building the economy.

The other thing they're looking for is a reduced tax burden so that they can reinvest in their businesses and grow the economy. They asked me to ask you, Minister, what are you doing to reduce red tape and taxes for small businesses?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for the question. We're doing both. Right now in the province of Ontario we have two governments tripping over themselves, trying to tax every transaction twice, when only once will do. We only have one tax collector for personal income tax, one tax collector for corporate tax and now I say to the small business community, we are only going to have one tax collector, the federal government, when it comes to the sales tax. As a result, we'll be able to eliminate over 5,000 pages of regulations in regard to the retail sales tax that have built up since 1961. I know that the business community is particularly happy that we can do that.

As well, under our tax reform package for small businesses, we are lowering, on July 1, the small business rate from 5% to 4%. As the only province, we will be eliminating the small business deduction surtax, which has been a job killer. We're eliminating that so that small business—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Minister, job creation is one thing. It's obviously critical, but when I'm talking to people up in Willowdale, they're very worried because they've been hearing that all items in the province are going to increase in price by 13%.

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I think everyone wants to see a more competitive Ontario, but no one wants to see this on the backs of those least able to pay. The unemployed, those on modest incomes and seniors on fixed incomes don't have the flexibility in their budgets. Minister, how is the harmonized sales tax going to affect low-income Ontarians and others least able to afford it?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Because the HST is part of an overarching tax reform, what it means under tax reform is that for the people whom you have raised, from your constituents and so many others, people with a lack of disposable income—and I'm thinking of seniors on a fixed income, middle-income families with a lot of children and people on social assistance—will be better off after July 1 because they will benefit from our targeted tax cuts, our targeted tax eliminations and our increased targeted tax credits. Overall, it will put them in a better position.

But I would like to put to rest that rumour that's being perpetrated by others in this place that somehow, taxes on sales taxes are going up everywhere. There could be nothing farther from the truth. For 83% of the things that people buy each and every day, there is absolutely no change in sales tax. It will apply, because of a broader tax base, to energy and services, but that gives us—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. My constituents are furious that you are cutting off debate on the natural gas plant that is going into King township. This is a plant that you have ordered to be built in the middle of the greenbelt in the Holland Marsh, and now you want to use a loophole in the Planning Act to force it through. The mayor of King says that you "circumvent the very process set up to publicly adjudicate such proposals; a process that was established to protect the people and the environment of Ontario and to respect the voters' wishes in the municipality."

Are you using the Planning Act to kill the hearings at the OMB on this natural gas plant because you know you'll lose?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would never think that. I would never presume wins or losses in any of these situations.

I really respect the opinion of my friend Frank Klees very much, and the treasurer—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The riding, please.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Oh, sorry; riding names—and the riding he represents. I want to tell you that his strong support for this is something that I think everybody takes into consideration.

As you know, there has been a posting by the ministry that allows people 45 days to comment on this particular project. I know that everyone who has a comment, including my good friend Mr. Klees and others, will be able to comment favourably or unfavourably as a result of the opportunity of that 45-day ability to comment—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Julia Munro: All Ontario families must be concerned with a Premier who finds never-before-used loopholes in his Planning Act. He has ignored the calls of more than 50 municipalities that want a moratorium on wind farms. Now he is ignoring the people of King, who have already spent $200,000 fighting this plant at the Ontario Municipal Board. The mayor said in a letter to the Premier, "We ... followed your legislative process to the letter of the law at considerable expense to our taxpayers; yet, you have moved to override us right in the middle of an" OMB "hearing."

This is a question the member for Oak Ridges–Markham won't ask, but I know that my constituents and many of hers want to know: Why would you use a loophole to destroy the integrity of the planning process?

Hon. James J. Bradley: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member brought up families in her question, and I want to say that that's what this is all about. It's about the families and businesses in King township and northern York region. They need power to lead their quality of life. The businesses in that community need stable sources of power to run their businesses. The clock is ticking. If we do not move, it's very clear that this community could be subjected to brownouts.

That was a policy that was acceptable to the Tories. In fact, they brought us very close to that. If we would have followed their direction, we would be browning out all over this province. But we are for reliable sources of power. We'll make the tough decisions we need to make to protect those very residents, to ensure that they have access to energy supply. That's our—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. What does the Premier think of a construction company that has received hundreds of millions of dollars in provincial government construction contracts but refuses to pay its subcontractors long after they have completed the construction work and, instead, forces them to file expensive lawsuits, which take two or three years, before they get paid? What does the Premier think of this kind of unethical business conduct?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I saw the Attorney General here a moment ago. I believe he's here right now, and I refer the question to him, if I might.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Let's just understand about the lien act. It was brought in decades ago as a result of some very difficult and protracted discussions between all of the parties involved in construction. Everybody—everybody—compromised to some extent.

It is a zero-sum game, meaning that if you change the rules to benefit one party to the construction equation, others are going to lose funds. What we've been doing is discussing with all of the different parties potential amendments that would strengthen our construction framework and benefit all parties. We're still having those discussions now. In fact, we have started some consultations to make sure that any proposal we bring in works for the province of Ontario and the people of Ontario, including all those—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: It is not a surprise to me that the Premier didn't want to answer the question. The company is Carillion Canada, and it has received hundreds of millions of dollars from the McGuinty government and has habitually, over the last four or five years, refused to pay its subcontractors, leaving thousands of workers and dozens of subcontractors in the lurch. Meanwhile, Carillion Canada has given thousands of dollars to Liberal candidates and Liberal riding associations.

My question is this: Since Carillion Canada has received hundreds of millions of dollars of government money and has found that it can afford to give thousands of dollars to Liberal candidates and Liberal riding associations, when is the Liberal government going to demand that Carillion Canada pay the subcontractors—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: My friend knows that I wouldn't comment on a specific case, but he chooses the

protection of the House, the protection of privileged comment to make comments that are really beneath a member, beneath a former Attorney General and beneath this House.

If the real issue is to strengthen the legal framework around construction, there's a way to do that. If the real issue is to score political points free of commentary or the recourse of those who are smeared, he did it exactly the right way.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Each year, thousands of newcomers make their home in Ontario because of its rich cultural diversity, high quality of life and boundless potential for economic opportunity. One high-demand sector that attracts many newcomers to Ontario is the information and communications technology industry, also known as ICT. According to an industry forecast, there's a high demand but short supply of ICT professionals who possess the total package of business and technical skills that employers require. The ICT industry also estimates that about 3,600 newcomers settle in Ontario each year to pursue a career in ICT. What is the government doing to help—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

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Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm very happy to speak to the question from the member from Scarborough–Rouge River.

To help our newcomer professionals succeed, the McGuinty government has partnered with the Information and Communications Technology Council to create exciting new opportunities for newcomers in Ontario's growing technology sector. The McGuinty government is also pleased to be working with JVS Toronto as they continue to build on their tradition of excellence by delivering valuable services that help newcomers integrate into Ontario's workplace.

My ministry recently launched the integrated work experience strategy, a new skills training program that will provide internationally trained newcomer professionals with the skills they need to succeed. This program provides six weeks of intensive classroom training. It provides business networking, mentoring and other work experience, which are important for these individuals to succeed because—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm pleased to hear that the government is taking real action to help Ontario newcomers adapt their skills to Ontario's workplaces. JVS Toronto, which has offices throughout the city, has a proud tradition of helping newcomers in Toronto since the end of World War II.

We've all heard stories of highly skilled newcomers who uprooted their families to Ontario in the hope of a better life and a brighter future. Some of these newcomers quickly adapt their talents to the Canadian workforce. Others, unfortunately, are working in jobs unrelated to their professions. This concerns me, as it should concern all Ontarians, because we depend on newcomers to ensure that Ontario remains strong and prosperous. Can the minister tell this House what the government is doing to help newcomers get good-quality jobs in their professions?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The McGuinty government understands that integrating newcomers into the workforce is the key to their success. That's why removing the barriers for newcomers so that they can work in their professions is a high priority for this government. We led the way in 2006 with the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, and we are leading the way with our highly successful bridge training programs.

Since 2003, the McGuinty government has invested more than $145 million in 200 bridge training programs that have helped thousands of newcomers get the training they need. For example, 80% of the individuals who completed the construction management bridging project at George Brown College found jobs within one year of graduation.

There's still more work to do, but we are making important progress by giving newcomers the opportunities they need to obtain jobs in their field of expertise.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Today we're voting on Bill 191. When this bill came before committee last summer, it sparked a torrent of protests. This bill is a bill that got the Liberals labelled Canada's worst government. First Nations are against it, northerners are against it, foresters, prospectors and miners: Everyone agreed that you didn't consult with them. Despite the fact that everyone has told you that this bill will destroy the northern economy and subject our First Nations to generational poverty, you seem hell-bent on making northern Ontario a gigantic park, a park of poverty and destitution. Minister, why was the World Wildlife Fund the only group before committee that said they were consulted before you put forward this bill?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The comments aren't appreciated.

Minister?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I appreciate the question. I am very proud of our government and the work that we've done to make a commitment to the Far North. We've been very clear in our objectives; certainly, we announced it early in the throne speech and in our budget speech. We have a vision for the Far North that is far-reaching.

We recognize the social, environmental and economic interests of First Nations and people in the north. I have spent personal time going to the north, talking to First Nations, talking to mayors, because it's extraordinarily important to have their buy-in and their participation. We

have been very diligent in visiting the north, and I intend to visit again. There will be hearings in the north coming up shortly. I look forward to the input from our northern First Nations as well as our northern residents. It's important that we have their participation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, this isn't the first time you Liberals have been in bed with environmental special interests. The Timmins Daily Press said on May 25 that your government was played like a fiddle and that you were promised "good publicity" for giving environmental groups exclusive rights.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I know that many people would like to go home. I'm quite content to continue on. We'll just sit here and let the clock sit in "hold" mode.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I know how much everybody loves question period. It was certainly my favourite time of the day.

Please continue.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, a report released by the Ivey Foundation smugly sets out how a group of Toronto special interests played your government for fools. You've lost control of your ministry, we've lost $62 million since you took power, and now your Bill 191 will crush all development in the north. The Ivey Foundation report shows that your government has abandoned northerners and stakeholders for Toronto special interests.

Minister, you've failed in your duty to the people of Ontario. Will you drop Bill 191 and resign?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'm really proud of the way we've conducted ourselves with Bill 191. In 2009, we heard from our First Nations, our stakeholders and the public and we responded by tabling amendments. We're going out again. That is unprecedented in legislation. In 2009, we conducted extensive northern consultations. Again, that's a unique way of consulting with communities.

We're committed to working with the Far North. In fact, in May we had 33 of 34 northern communities participate in the land use planning base. That is extraordinary participation. The response has been positive. I can tell you, I continue to appreciate the valuable contribution that our First Nations and northern communities provide. Their participation is overwhelming. They want to participate. They're enthusiastic. We're happy to work with them. This is important legislation.

PENSION REFORM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. In just 10 days, Canada's finance ministers will gather in PEI to decide upon the future of retirement savings. In my own discussions with government representatives from across this country, people want to know if the McGuinty government will turn its back on public pensions just because the insurance industry wants the billions of dollars in management fees that private retirement solutions would give them.

Are they right to be concerned? Will this government simply be a mouthpiece for the insurance industry at this historic pension meeting?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Later this afternoon I'll have the opportunity to meet with a number of Canada's leading labour leaders on pension issues. I'll be meeting with Brother Sid Ryan; I will be meeting with a range of others. This government takes an open and balanced approach to what I think is one of the most important issues confronting this country.

I had the opportunity to speak with Ken Lewenza at some length both on the HST and pensions. I've had the opportunity to meet with Ken Georgetti in my office. I have met and spoken with finance ministers and ministers responsible in Manitoba and Nova Scotia. All of us are looking forward to meeting in Prince Edward Island to advance the agenda of stronger and better pensions and—I would go beyond that—post-retirement incomes for all Canadians.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I didn't ask for a list of the meetings that this minister had. I want to know what his position is on public pensions versus putting money in the pockets of the private insurance industry. Other governments, not just me, are right to be concerned that the McGuinty government is in the pockets of the insurance industry. The McGuinty government voted—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I don't need help from the government. I'd ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw it, Speaker.

The McGuinty government voted—

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's what the McGuinty government has been doing—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No. That's not helpful either, member from Renfrew. Please continue.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The McGuinty government voted unanimously against an NDP motion supporting public pensions and unanimously supported a Liberal bill that would mean billions of dollars more in fees collected by insurance companies.

So I'm asking again, will the McGuinty government simply be a puppet for the insurance companies in PEI or will it side with Ontarians and be a forceful advocate for public pensions?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member displays—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. We have 10 minutes exactly. Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Only 30% of Ontarians even have a pension, and that member has not addressed that issue.

Finance ministers, at the behest of Premier McGuinty when we first called for a national summit, have pulled together. We've been working across the country to build a consensus on a range of options that are available, including all political parties.

I would suggest to the member that it's about more than people with pensions. It's about that 70% of us who don't have a pension. It's about post-retirement income. They are not addressing that question. They're trying to score cheap political points, mischaracterizing the position of the government. We're not going to fall into—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I recently read that Bluewater Health, which serves my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, was able to recruit the equivalent of 13 and a half full-time physicians within the past 18 months. That's very good news for a community that historically has been underserviced.

Could the minister please inform this House of our government's action to improve the quality of health care for people who access the Bluewater Health care system?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for her outstanding commitment to getting better health care for the people in her community. I'm very happy to talk about the successes that we're having in building a stronger, better health care system for all Ontarians.

Working with our LHINs, we've made significant progress in hospitals across the province, and Bluewater Health in Sarnia is just one example. Working with our partners, we've been able to bring down wait times for cataract surgery by 677 days. Hip replacements at Bluewater Health have come down by 255 days; and knee replacements, 198 days. These are significant reductions that have made a meaningful difference for people in the riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: This is again very good news, and I'm proud of the progress that our government has made for the people of Sarnia, Lambton county and across the province.

I also read that Bluewater Health previously had concerns about the number of alternate-level-of-care patients they had in their hospital. Could the minister please inform the House of the progress made at Bluewater Health to ensure that patients are receiving appropriate, high-quality and efficient care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We have been working very closely with the LHINs across the province, the hospitals and the community care access centres to bring down the number of people who are in hospital who don't need to be in hospital, who would be better served outside the hospital.

Bluewater Health is a great success. They've gone from having one in three beds occupied by an ALC patient to just 6%. It's an extraordinary achievement. They have been able to do this thanks in part to our aging-at-home strategy, where we've invested $5 million.

It wouldn't be possible without the hard work of people in the community. Betty Kuchta of the CCAC; Gary Switzer from the LHIN; Sue Denomy, the CEO of Bluewater Health; and all the people who work with them have really had a tremendous success, and I want to congratulate them.

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

Mr. John O'Toole: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, over the last few years and from the 1950s and 1960s, it's been well understood that there was a need for an east-west transportation corridor north of Toronto. That route is the 407, and it's the number one priority in Durham region.

The latest phase of the environmental assessment over the last decade concluded in January of this year. That environmental assessment report is on your desk, Minister. The estimated date for that report to be released for your comments on the 407 website was May or early June.

Minister, the question for you today, as you've missed the deadline of May: Can you release the report from the environmental assessment on the 407 east expansion? When are you going to start construction on the 407 east?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'd like to thank the member for the question. The environmental assessment on that project has been approved by the ministry. It will now be turned back over to the Ministry of Transportation, and they will be dealing with the construction of at least the first phase of that. The environmental assessment of that has been approved just within the last week.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John O'Toole: That's good news. I hope you get on with the job. You've been dithering and delaying.

You know that the congestion on our 400-series highways costs the economy of Ontario $3.3 billion annually, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Your colleague the current Minister of Municipal Affairs and former Minister of Transportation estimates that the 407 east expansion is scheduled to be completed by 2013. Minister, can you advise if the 407 east expansion is still on track to be completed by 2013? Would I be safe in making that commitment, or is it another failed promise by the McGuinty government?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I know that the Minister of Transportation is looking forward to answering this part of the question.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very happy to say that we are going to be able to deal with this issue publicly very soon. We are absolutely going to work on getting this road extended.

But I do have to say that I really don't think that we should be taking advice on the 407 from the party

opposite. I think that it would be a travesty for us to listen to the party opposite on any aspect of this project.

I absolutely understand that people in the eastern part of this province need this project to go ahead. The EA has been done. We are going to be announcing very shortly the staging of this project. We're committed to pushing that road out. We're committed to that extension. We're going to keep working on it. But we're not going to take advice from the party opposite on the 407.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Can't you just think about that wonderful corn-fed beef that is sitting out on the front lawn and how much I know all of you want to get out there?

New question.

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. In April, our leader, Andrea Horwath, wrote to the minister on behalf of homeowners stuck with badly built new homes: homes with leaks, crumbling foundations, faulty heating and cooling systems, cracks in walls and cracks in floors.

1140

Our leader asked the minister to meet with the homeowners. Yesterday the minister wrote back, saying "Meeting with me would be ineffective." Some of the homeowners are here today. Why is the minister afraid to meet with people who simply want developers to be held accountable when they build shoddy homes?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Thank you to the member for the question. I also would like to thank the Canadians for Properly Built Homes who are here on behalf of their advocacy. Thank you for coming.

Tarion's role is to ensure that new homeowners in Ontario receive the warranty protection that they are entitled to by law. In 2008 the Ombudsman of Ontario conducted a review and released a report about the public's understanding of the relationship between the ministry and Tarion. The ministry has implemented all of the recommendations.

Some of the things that were included in those recommendations are the hiring of an internal new-homebuyers ombudsperson in January 2009. That ombudsperson is to provide a review function for homeowner complaints with Tarion. In fact, they have—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: If the minister is so pleased to have this community here, I hope that means she's going to meet with them after question period. I take that as a yes.

This minister is also responsible for Tarion, Ontario's new home warranty program, yet she refuses to help homeowners who have been fleeced by crooked builders. The minister's silence on this issue about legitimate consumer complaints is absolutely unsettling.

Today I'm introducing a bill to give the provincial Ombudsman powers to review Tarion, which was one of his recommendations; since 1986 he has made that recommendation.

Will the minister support this bill? And if she won't, why not?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: It's a little rich, coming from that party, since they were the ones who voted against protecting homeowners from energy retailers.

I could answer the question. I don't need the member to say yes for me. I would be very happy to meet with you as soon as question period is over.

Let me just review one issue. The new-homebuyer ombudsperson, who has been in place since January 2009, received 271 complaints, which he did review. In fact, it's working. There is nothing more important to us, as a government, than protecting consumers, and that's exactly what we will do.

I look forward to our meeting after question period.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I rise on a point of order regarding an order paper question that I had submitted.

According to standing order 99(d), "The minister shall answer such written questions within 24 sessional days, unless he or she indicates that more time is required because the answer will be costly or time consuming or that he or she declines to answer, in which case a notation shall be made in the Orders and Notices paper following the question indicating that the minister has made an interim answer, the approximate date that the information will be available, or that the minister has declined to answer, as the case may be."

The minister did not answer my question, nor did he indicate that more time was needed. I instead received a list of eligibility criteria and the number of families that have received funding for the program I was inquiring about, neither of which I asked for in my order paper question.

I have a copy of my order paper question with me. I would ask that you review the answer that I have been provided and offer your advice as to what steps can be taken to resolve what I feel is a violation of standing order 99(d).

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for her point of order. I've made previous comments in this chamber that my role and what I can do is to enforce and to ensure that a question gets answered. Unfortunately, I can't interpret or persuade a ministry to provide an answer that is to your satisfaction.

Mr. Ted Arnott: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Yesterday at the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, the chief of staff to the Minister of Finance made statements that directly contradicted statements that were made twice in the House by the government House leader concerning what happened on budget day.

I would like to give the minister the opportunity, and seek the unanimous consent of the House to allow the

government House leader, to clarify this matter and perhaps apologize to the members of the opposition and to the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): As the honourable member knows, issues arising at committee need to be dealt with at the committee.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I want to take this opportunity, and would ask all members to join me, as we thank this great group of pages. We wish each and every one of them all the best in their future endeavours.

Also, I would like to take this opportunity to remind members to make sure they have it in their schedule that the International Plowing Match is going to be held in Elgin county, just outside of St. Thomas, September 21 to 25. Members, staff and any viewers, make sure you come and visit the International Plowing Match.

DEFERRED VOTES

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ENSEIGNEMENT POSTSECONDAIRE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau postsecondaire, la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel et la Loi de 2002 sur l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On June 2, Mr. Milloy moved third reading of Bill 43. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Gerretsen, John	Miller, Paul
Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Milloy, John
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Mitchell, Carol
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Naqvi, Yasir
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Orazietti, David
Best, Margarett	Johnson, Rick	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Kular, Kuldip	Prue, Michael
Broten, Laurel C.	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Brown, Michael A.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Sergio, Mario
Carroll, Aileen	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Marchese, Rosario	Sousa, Charles
Chiarelli, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Tabuns, Peter
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dickson, Joe	McGuinty, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Savoline, Joyce
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Shurman, Peter
Clark, Steve	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Elliott, Christine	O'Toole, John	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 63; the nays are 14.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

FAR NORTH ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE GRAND NORD

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North / Projet de loi 191, Loi relative à l'aménagement et à la protection du Grand Nord.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? I heard a no.

The division bells rang from 1153 to 1158.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members please take their seats.

On May 18, 2010, Mrs. Jeffrey moved second reading of Bill 191. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John
Albanese, Laura	Gerretsen, John	Mitchell, Carol
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Orazietti, David
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Pendergast, Leeanna
Best, Margarett	Jeffrey, Linda	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Rick	Pupatello, Sandra
Broten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Carroll, Aileen	Levac, Dave	Sergio, Mario
Chan, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Chiarelli, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dickson, Joe	McGuinty, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria

Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Jones, Sylvia	Savoline, Joyce
Clark, Steve	Kormos, Peter	Shurman, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Paul	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 60; the nays are 23.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2010, this bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 68, Loi favorisant un Ontario propice aux affaires en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 68, An Act to promote Ontario as open for business by amending or repealing certain Acts.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Interjections: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 60; the nays are 23.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2010, this bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

I take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and safe summer. I look forward to seeing all of you in the fall. I would welcome a motion to extend question period through the summer and gladly love to be here, but in all seriousness, have a safe summer. Make sure you get out and explore Ontario. And remember: Buy local, buy Ontario, buy Canadian. Have a great summer.

This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1200 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to welcome the Ontario Cattlemen's Association to Queen's Park. I'll be speaking about them further in a few minutes, but I want to recognize a few representatives who are here in the members' gallery: Dan Ferguson, Bob Gordanier, Rick Hobbs, Bill Herron and Gerald Rollins. I want to thank them for lunch. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I want to welcome today the students from the Albert Campbell Collegiate Institute debating club. They are in the east gallery.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine, Josh Terry. He's a constituent from the riding of Durham but, more importantly, he was the assistant to the Honourable Bev Oda, MP for the riding of Durham, and is currently on placement at the Royal Ontario Museum. Congratulations, Josh—and his friend Jessica McDonnell. Welcome to Queen's Park.

They're not here just yet, but I'd like to acknowledge two young constituents as well from my riding—I believe they're interns or some role—Caroline and Harriet Bynon-Murray, who are currently summer interns here at Queen's Park. I'm looking forward to meeting them this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan and page Mary McPherson, to welcome her mother, Tracy Shields, to Queen's Park today.

LEGISLATIVE USHERS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to invite all members to join me in congratulating this year's group of student legislative ushers, who have performed their duties admirably and provided excellent service to this House all year long: Jordan Paolucci, the team leader; Shiva Logarajah, Claire Glossop, Duri Song, Natalie Orellana, Janette Piasecki, Jenna Smith, Maria Chung, Tamara Quashie, Tracy Chen, Tyrone Davis, Harlan Tufford, Michael O'Shaughnessy, Osman Akhtar, Bedour Alagraa, Shae Frosst, Nick Turner, Ryan Nutter, Darcy Glyn Williams and Yi Jian Chen.

Some of these ushers will be returning next year, while others are graduating and pursuing their careers. On behalf of the Ontario Legislature, I'd like to wish all of our ushers all the best in their future endeavours.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CATTLE FARMERS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to welcome the Ontario Cattlemen's Association to Queen's Park and thank them for providing members with a wonderful Ontario corn-fed beef barbecue lunch today.

The cattlemen make a significant contribution to our provincial and national economy. Beef production is worth over $1.8 billion to the Canadian GDP and creates more than 26,000 direct and indirect jobs.

I want to thank the cattlemen's association for coming here to tell us about the difficulties they are facing. This morning, I had the opportunity to meet with elected representatives for the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, and I talked with some of our cattle farmers during the day about the challenges they are facing. They've made it clear that farmers need the government to immediately commit their 40% funding for new risk management programs. They expect the Ontario government to support Ontario farmers the same way the Quebec government supports Quebec farmers.

Losses in the beef sector were almost $200 million last year. Producers are losing their ability to re-mortgage their farms. The situation is unsustainable.

The government cannot come out of this round of federal-provincial-territorial talks with the same empty rhetoric in the closing press release. It's time for positive action. The Ontario government must take the lead in supporting Ontario's farmers. Later this afternoon, we will be debating Jim Wilson's resolution on that issue.

I hope that after hearing from the cattlemen about what they need and enjoying the fine lunch they provided all the members, all the members in this House will support that resolution on behalf of Ontario's farmers.

ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Members of the assembly would know that there has been a controversy brewing for time in regard to lands that are owned by the Toronto District School Board and lands that are claimed by the Mohawk in regard to the Haldimand Proclamation.

This is an issue that the government can find a solution for fairly simply. The Toronto District School Board has told the Mohawk people that if they access that land, they will charge them with trespassing and use the full extent of the law to prevent them from using land that was given to them, the Mohawk people, through the Haldimand Proclamation. The government, to fix this, quite simply could do what the Toronto District School Board is asking, and that is to purchase the land so that the province gets title to the land. In exchange, the province would then transfer that land to the Mohawk people.

It seems to me that if a deal was made over 100 years ago with the Mohawk people in order to grant that land to them, certainly we can fix this problem by finding a peaceful solution to a situation that doesn't need to escalate. The key is that the provincial government would have to sit down with the Toronto District School Board. The Toronto District School Board, as I understand it, is prepared to sell the land for a sum of around $750,000. I call on this government to do that, to enter into negotiations with the Toronto District School Board and, once the land title has reverted to the crown, enact what we had done in the Haldimand Proclamation many years ago and transfer that land back to the Mohawk people so they can use it for their traditional use.

DEBATE TOURNAMENT

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Today, students and their teacher from Albert Campbell Collegiate Institute, a school located in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River, are visiting Queen's Park. These students are members of the school's debate club and are the champions of a debate tournament against teams from Dr. Norman Bethune and L'Amoreaux Collegiate Institutes in Scarborough.

I encouraged, supported and sponsored this tournament for two reasons. First, I wanted to raise awareness of the democratic process in Ontario and the importance of voting, especially amongst newcomers, and I wanted to stress the importance of community involvement. The winners are visiting Queen's Park to observe the legislative process in our province, which will enhance their learning. I must say that all the participants in the debate did a fantastic job. Although there is only one winner, they all gained valuable skills, such as public speaking, research, and defending their point of view.

The debates ranged from the right to prorogue the House to the education system, and I must say that they were very intense. I want to congratulate the champions and welcome them to Queen's Park. I hope they have a great day here today.

I also want to thank the principals and the teachers from all the schools for their active participation in making the debate such a success. All the students are here in the east gallery, so if we could give them a big round of applause.

LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY

Mr. Toby Barrett: This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Long Point Bird Observatory, the first research program in North America dedicated to migratory and breeding birds. It was in April 1960 that volunteers led by David Hussell and Erica Dunn began banding and monitoring on the tip of Long Point. My father and I took our 18-foot cedar-strip boat out from Port Dover to the tip of the Point back on that April day.

Over the 50 years, we now have a huge database of 750,000 birds banded, checked for disease and weighed. The weekend of May 14 saw birders across the country leave their nests to return and enjoy 50th-anniversary celebrations and reminisce of burying the Jeep and the Land Rover on the south beach at the Point.

My father, Harry, was joined by the who's who of the field: Fred Bosworth, Bob Stamp, Bruce Falls, Bob and Ross Bateman, and Jim and Pat Woodford, just to name a few of the originals. Pat is credited with banding the first bird, a song sparrow, 50 years ago at the tip of the Point.

The Long Point Bird Observatory is associated with Bird Studies Canada. I invite members present and people to check out the visitors' centre at Port Rowan

and help recognize and celebrate 50 years of valuable, neutral, objective research and a lot of hard work out on the end of Long Point.

BREAD AND HONEY FESTIVAL

Mr. Bob Delaney: Volunteers and residents in Streetsville are preparing for the annual event that marks the start of summer in Mississauga: Streetsville's Bread and Honey Festival.

The main stage will be home to dozens of performers throughout the weekend, from a Celtic rock band to a Paul McCartney tribute show. The Habitat for Humanity playhouse will hold a building competition on the island on both Saturday and Sunday.

1310

I will serve pancakes at the Rotary pancake breakfast on Sunday morning in the newly renovated Vic Johnston hall.

Residents and visitors can participate in the 32nd annual Bread and Honey Race, and can enjoy ward 11 Councillor George Carlson's fishing derby on the Credit River banks on Sunday at 9 a.m.

And be sure to visit my booth in the Rotary consumer market inside the Vic Johnston arena Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Local arts and crafts will be offered for sale by artisans and businesses, both local and from across Ontario.

During the three days of the Bread and Honey Festival, visitors can enjoy fresh slices of bread covered in sweet honey. Come and enjoy the legendary Streetsville hospitality, enjoy Mississauga and visit the 2010 Bread and Honey Festival.

BROCKVILLE AND AREA YMCA

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise today to recognize the 150th anniversary that the Brockville and Area YMCA is celebrating this year. The Y has a long history, and it looks very different today than when it started 150 years ago. It has gone from delivering programs in rented spaces to having an incredible facility to call home; from Bible classes, camera clubs and canoe competitions to being a leading child care provider and teaching kids to swim in its very own pool; and from serving the needs of young Christian men to serving the needs of individuals of all ages, genders and backgrounds.

Over the years, this not-for-profit charity has faced both challenging and flourishing economic times. It has embarked upon campaigns called the "Save the Y" as well as "Build the Y Pool." The generosity and vision of community leaders have ensured its survival and success.

Today, the Y serves the kids and families in our region through leadership development, camp, child care, fitness and recreation, making a difference in the lives of thousands.

Congratulations to past and present staff, volunteers and also their membership for this milestone.

I also want to recognize the eight people recently named as Y champions: George Smith; Bruce Wylie; David Beatty; Jan Laidley; Paul Fournier; Don and Shirley Green; and the late Dr. Anthony Dunn.

The Y's mission to help individuals grow in spirit, mind and body in service to others and in an environment open to all is alive and well-positioned to positively impact the health and wellness of our families for years to come.

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: This past Saturday, May 29, I had the opportunity to participate in the second annual Road Today Truck Show in Brampton. It was great to support an event that highlighted the importance of road safety and the trucking industry here in Ontario.

The trucking industry helps to fuel our economy, and this industry has been the backbone of our manufacturing and trade sector in the province of Ontario. In Ontario alone, trucks transport over 90% of our food and consumer products. This industry employs more than 200,000 people, and out of that, 75,000 are truck drivers.

Our government is working to ensure that this industry remains prosperous, and we are committed to improving road safety.

I want to thank all the organizers and volunteers for hosting such a great event and helping all of us to understand the need to inform and educate our community about the trucking industry.

On behalf of the residents of Mississauga–Brampton South, I would like to express my appreciation for the hard work and dedication of truckers all across the province.

MINOR SOCCER

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: In the spirit of the World Cup, I would like to stand today to recognize all the parents and coaches across the province who make minor soccer in Ontario a success and thank them for their efforts.

Specifically, I'd like to recognize Kitchener minor soccer. Their motto is, "Building better people through soccer." I want to highlight, as a soccer mom—

Interjection.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Thank you—the Kitchener Spirit boys under 12; their coach, Mario Halapir; the manager, Sue Halapir; the assistant coach, Rick Ryeger; all of the parents who travel the province weekend after weekend to support our young players. I want to say thank you.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Great people.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Wonderful.

Kitchener Spirit 98 Boys are very unique in this respect. They've had an unparalleled amount of success on the field while truly exemplifying the core value of sportsmanship—not seen regularly in this realm of competition.

This year, the team was promoted to the top league available for players in our district and has started the season by winning their league cup tournament. The Spirit Boys also won the West Niagara Invitational Soccer Tournament, and, at their age, they're allowed to compete in the prestigious Ontario Cup. They made their way through the first round.

I want to commend Coach Halapir for his commitment to our children, I want to thank the boys, and I want to recognize the keeper, Ben Upenieks, my 11-year-old son.

I want to leave you with a comment from the coach, who says, "Winning's not the measuring stick. The effort and commitment to get there is." Thank you, Coach Halapir.

PETRIE ISLAND

Mr. Phil McNeely: Today, I would like to recognize and acknowledge the work done by Sonshine Families and especially its director, Len Goddard, in promoting youth activity at Petrie Island in Ottawa–Orléans, one of the premier outdoor recreation sites in all of the national capital region.

Sonshine's Petrie Island Recreational Initiatives and Training, better known as SPIRIT, recently received an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant in the amount of $13,500 to purchase a shelter and equipment.

I'm very proud to say that I helped establish Petrie Island as a public beach and park during my tenure on Ottawa city council. As a matter of fact, I launched my campaign there in 1999. A lot of the work has been done by a great many people, including Al Tweddle and the Friends of Petrie Island, to promote this site since that time.

Still, we've only scratched the surface when it comes to helping the site reach its full potential for youth and seniors and all Orléans residents. Several groups are currently working on plans to introduce additional programs to the island, including canoeing, kayaking and small sailboats.

On Sunday, I will be a participant on a panel discussion about Petrie Island at the Queenswood United Church, led by Pastor Ed Gratton. I look forward to the ideas that will flow from this event.

On July 1, thousands of people from across the region will descend on Petrie Island to celebrate Canada Day as part of the Greater Orléans Canada Day Celebration. I know I will be there. I look forward to meeting my fellow Petrie Island enthusiasts on Canada Day.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Margarett R. Best: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In my supplementary response to the question from the member for Ottawa–Orléans on June 1—I might add, congratulations on all the health promotion work you're doing, and also my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga.

On June 1, 2010, my statement, "We have put up tobacco power walls," should read, "We have banned tobacco power walls."

While I have the floor, I would like to take this opportunity, with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, to welcome Amy Wanounou, the coordinator of government relations and public policy of the Hospital for Sick Children's Safe Kids injury prevention program, who is here with us in the east members' gallery. Thank you for coming.

This week is Safe Kids Week in Ontario. During this time, we partner with our program and with community organizations throughout the province to raise awareness and promote injury prevention among our children and youth.

Thank you, and welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Half of that was a point of order.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And the other half was your generosity.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present the Report on Agencies, Boards and Commissions: the Royal Ontario Museum, from the Standing Committee on Government Agencies and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, it is a privilege to table this report on our study of the operations of the Royal Ontario Museum. The report of the committee notes the recent transformation and innovations at this venerable institution and makes some recommendations for further improvements.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chair, the CEO and staff of the Royal Ontario Museum for their assistance and to express our appreciation to those who made presentations to the committee, both in person and in writing.

I thank the committee members for their ongoing contribution to the agency review process. Thanks as well to our committee clerk, Douglas Arnott, and research officer Avrum Fenson.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RENTERS' RIGHT TO KNOW ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DROIT DE SAVOIR DES LOCATAIRES

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 94, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to reporting bed bug information / Projet de loi 94, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne les rapports sur la présence de punaises des lits.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Mike Colle: A very short statement: The Renters Right to Know Act, 2010, amends the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, to require landlords, before a tenancy agreement is entered into, to disclose information that has come to the landlords' attention during the previous five-year period with respect to bedbugs in a rental unit or any other rental unit in a residential complex.

PRESERVING THE DIGNITY OF THE ONTARIO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PRÉSERVATION DE LA DIGNITÉ DE L'ÉDIFICE DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Marchese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to prohibit the construction of certain buildings north of the Legislative Building at Queen's Park / Projet de loi 95, Loi interdisant la construction de certains bâtiments au nord de l'Édifice de l'Assemblée législative à Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The bill prohibits the construction of a building or structure if any part of it is visible above the roof of the legislative building at Queen's Park when viewed by a person standing at the intersection of Queen Street West and University Avenue. The bill also renders any decision or order of the Ontario Municipal Board that would permit such construction void, including any decision or order made after January 1, 2010.

MICHELLE KROHN ACT (MODIFIED DRIVER'S LICENCE), 2010

LOI MICHELLE KROHN DE 2010 SUR LES PERMIS DE CONDUIRE MODIFIÉS

Mr. Ramal moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 97, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an optional modified driver's licence / Projet de loi 97, Loi modifiant le Code de la route afin de créer un permis de conduire modifié facultatif.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to add a new section, 38.1, which creates a modified driver's licence. The minister may issue a modified driver's licence to a person who elects to hold this licence and who meets the requirements set out in section 38.1. A modified driver's licence is subject to a condition that the holder is not permitted to drive a vehicle on specific highways. The bill also provides that any particular test necessary to obtain a modified driver's licence would not require driving on a specific highway.

ONTARIO NEW HOME WARRANTIES PLAN AMENDMENT ACT (OMBUDSMAN'S POWERS), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE RÉGIME DE GARANTIES DES LOGEMENTS NEUFS DE L'ONTARIO (POUVOIRS DE L'OMBUDSMAN)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to give the Ombudsman power in respect of the Corporation / Projet de loi 98, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Régime de garanties des logements neufs de l'Ontario afin de conférer des pouvoirs à l'ombudsman à l'égard de la Société.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The bill amends the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to provide that the Ombudsman's powers under the Ombudsman Act in respect of any governmental organization apply to the corporation established under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act. The bill also provides for necessary modifications in the application of the Ombudsman Act.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to meet

during the summer adjournment for up to three days, at the call of the Chair, to consider the 2009 annual report of the Auditor General; and

That the committee be authorized to release any reports during the summer adjournment by depositing a copy of any report with the Clerk of the Assembly, and upon the resumption of the meetings of the House the Chair of the committee shall bring any such reports before the House in accordance with the standing orders.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. John O'Toole: It is a pleasure today to rise and present a petition from the riding of Northumberland. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the government-appointed local health integration network (LHIN) has approved a budget proposal by the Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) that includes plans to close 26 hospital beds, outpatient rehabilitation and the diabetes education clinic; and

"Whereas these cuts will leave no outpatient rehabilitation (including physio- and occupational therapy) available for patients in Northumberland county; and

"Whereas this cut leaves all patients with insulin-dependent diabetes without education and support that is vital to prevent serious health decline; and

"Whereas these cuts will result in for-profit privatization of hospital beds and services and new user fees for patients; and

"Whereas private, for-profit, unaccredited retirement homes are not safe or appropriate to house patients who need professional nursing and health care; and

"Whereas the NHH is considered a very efficient hospital in comparison with peer hospitals and the people of west Northumberland have already made a huge sacrifice regarding hospital services;

"Therefore be it resolved:

"That the McGuinty government act immediately to protect patients in Northumberland Hills, fund the hospital to maintain the current services, and stop the hospital bed and service cuts."

I'm pleased to sign and support this, and hopefully the member from Northumberland will speak up on behalf of this hospital.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Paul Miller: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas workplace injuries should not result in the poverty of an injured worker, and that it is the duty of a workers' compensation system to ensure the financial security of those who can no longer engage in the labour market, and that financial burdens accumulated by the workers' compensation system should not be the burden of the injured worker;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all those who engage in work in Ontario shall be covered under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act; that the Legislature shall eliminate deeming permanently disabled workers to be earning income when they are not; that annual cost-of-living adjustments be made a permanent addition to the legislation; that claims-based experience rating be eliminated; and that the unfunded liability not be reduced at the expense of the injured worker."

I agree with this and will affix my name, and Yidu will bring it down.

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POWER PLANT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I have a petition today signed by a number of family physicians in my community. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, in view of the recent natural-gas-fired explosion in Connecticut and the placement in Ontario of such facilities in close proximity to homes and schools;

"Whereas, in view of the absence of enforceable standards for the level of fine particulate matter in ambient air since it was declared a toxic substance one decade ago under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act;

"Whereas, in view of the premature mortality and adverse health effects, largely attributable to fine particulate matter, which may arise from large natural-gas-fired generation facilities close to population centres;

"We, the undersigned physicians, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to institute the following:

"(1) A moratorium on the development of all natural-gas-fired power plants until appropriate safety setbacks are legislated.

"(2) The legislation of regulatory standards for fine particulate matter and the further regulation of precursor gaseous" pollutants "that contribute to its secondary formation.

"(3) A requirement that all natural-gas-fired power plants undergo an individual environmental assessment."

I agree with this and I will send it to the table with page Ana.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed."

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas violent crime and gangs have been a problem in our communities; children require safe schools and safe streets in order to thrive;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To continue with their support of the guns and gangs program;

"To continue to recognize the importance of a strong and educated police force;

"To continue to support rehabilitation programs;

"To continue to keep education as a top priority; and

"To continue to make our streets and schools safe places to be."

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it to the table with page Mary.

ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

"Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational requirements and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found $12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition from Community Living in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector."

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from a great many people in my riding who signed this petition.

"Whereas residents of Oxford do not want Dalton McGuinty's new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over $500,000; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under $4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers and low-income Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families."

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from students at Cairine

Wilson high school: Stéphanie Boulerice, Alexandre De Courreur, Emily Cleroux and 35 others.

"Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring 'abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species;' and

"Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

"Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

"Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

"Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change."

I will sign this petition and send it up with Dylan.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the cuts to health care, specifically the 15-bed closure and staffing changes at Brockville General Hospital. There were no cuts to management but many changes to the people who deliver hands-on care, adding immeasurably to their workload. We need to ensure quality care and available beds. Balancing the budgets on the backs of staff is not acceptable.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The 15-bed closure and staffing changes at the Brockville General Hospital."

I'm pleased to sign it and give it to my wonderful Leeds–Grenville page, Luke.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Joe Dickson: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians pay more for popular generic drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure and other common health issues than patients in other jurisdictions; and

"Whereas Ontarians deserve fair prescription drug prices so that families and seniors are not charged more than those in other countries; and

"Whereas some members of the opposition have sided with large corporations to preserve the status quo rather than make prescription medications more affordable for Ontario patients by supporting the proposed drug reforms;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians by passing the government's legislation to lower the cost of prescription medications."

I shall attach my signature hereto and pass it to page Yidu.

TAXATION

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the illegal trade of cigarettes already accounts for almost 50% of all cigarettes purchased in the province and illegal products are available at a price that is already much lower than that for legal cigarettes (average $70 for a carton of 200 legal cigarettes versus $10 for 200 cigarettes in a plastic bag); and

"Whereas the HST, effective July 1, 2010, will raise legal tobacco prices by 8%, or another $4 to $7 per carton of 200 cigarettes, making illegal cigarettes even cheaper, and will likely only make the problem of illegal cigarettes worse in the province; and

"Whereas this situation will represent further losses to already suffering law-abiding retailers while only benefiting the organized crime groups behind the illegal trade;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To prevent the growth of illicit trade by temporarily reducing the provincial tobacco tax to offset the impact of the HST and keep the price of legal tobacco products static until the contraband problem in Ontario is under control."

I affix my signature to this, as I am in favour of it.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

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"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty $15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the $1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends;

"—increase wait times and lineups for patients;

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Whereas Tim Hudak's Conservatives' policies would stop access to affordable prescription drugs being available to Ontario families and seniors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to pursue legislation that will put an end to this flawed system of professional allowances for generic drugs in order to reinvest the savings, to the benefit of all Ontarians."

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it to the table with page Yidu.

TAXATION

Mr. John O'Toole: This is the last petition of this session, and it's a very serious one. It reads as follows:

"Whereas residents of Durham do not want Dalton McGuinty's new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over $500,000; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under $4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers and low-income Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families" on Canada Day. Shame.

I'm pleased to sign and endorse this and present it to Mary, one of the pages, on their last day here.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT (ENABLING MUNICIPALITIES TO REQUIRE INCLUSIONARY HOUSING), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE (INCLUSION DE LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES PAR LES MUNICIPALITÉS)

Ms. DiNovo moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 58, An Act to amend the Planning Act with respect to inclusionary housing / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire à l'égard de l'inclusion de logements abordables.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is a bill that has been before this House before. This is the second time I've brought it toward the members across the aisle and to those on this side of the aisle. With their indulgence, I hope that the result is the same: that they pass it again on second reading.

It's a modest proposal, but let me set the stage for my modest proposal. We are in a province now with a housing crisis. In fact, some would say that it's a disaster. It was named a national disaster at one point, and nothing very much has changed since then. We have 142,000 families waiting on affordable housing lists across the province of Ontario. We have 72,000 families just in the GTA area alone.

Anybody who is looking at the housing market now knows how difficult it is to afford a house, particularly in our major municipalities. I remember a time when, in my parents' generation, on one salary, you could own a house, own a car, pay for it outright and, if you were very, very lucky, maybe a cottage as well, and in those days you had a pension too. Those days are gone.

Now, in downtown Toronto, even two young people with two incomes in the average range would find it extremely difficult to afford a house at Toronto prices, and most likely would only be able to afford a small condo to get into the market. That's the big picture of Ontario and Ontario's housing.

This is not a bill that demands of the government to build new housing, although I have a motion on the order paper to do just that. In fact, Dalton McGuinty, back in 2003, promised 20,000 new affordable housing units—new builds. We still don't have those. This bill doesn't ask for that.

This bill doesn't ask that housing be made a human right in Ontario, even though there is a charter challenge before the courts and before this government to ask them to do just that. We keep in mind, of course, that the United Nations has called for housing as a human right. This bill doesn't do that, either.

This bill doesn't do what another one of my motions has asked, and that is to reform the Ontario Municipal Board so that cities with planning boards can take the bulk of that effort upon themselves and so that citizens' groups that are fighting against a developer or for something don't get stymied at the OMB level. We've had a classic case of that in my benchmate's bill, just tabled this afternoon, to stop the condo development that would obscure the skyline and the view of the citizens' Queen's Park.

This bill doesn't do any of that. It's a modest bill.

What does this bill do? All this bill does is amend the Planning Act so that municipalities can, if they want, introduce inclusionary zoning rules. This is not pre-

scriptive in any way, sense or form. What would happen now if a municipality tried to introduce inclusionary zoning bills of their own is that developers would take them to the Ontario Municipal Board and win. That's why they don't do it. So this bill simply makes it possible for a municipality to introduce inclusionary zoning.

What is inclusionary zoning? Inclusionary zoning is simply an act that asks—and it could be mandatory; it could be voluntary—developers to set aside a certain number of units as affordable housing.

I was challenged by the then housing minister, Mr. Watson, to go to the municipalities and get motions passed to support my bill—the bill was lost due to prorogation; that's why I'm bringing it back again—so we took up that challenge. We wrote to councillors across Ontario. We wrote to municipalities across Ontario. The cities of Toronto, London, Thunder Bay, Milton, the town of the Blue Mountains—and councillors in countless other cities who supported this motion—those towns actually passed motions to support my inclusionary zoning bill. The support was unbelievable. It was over what we ever thought we would get. It was astounding, in fact. Even Hazel McCallion, who was sitting downstairs having lunch with Mr. Watson at the time—I remember asking her if she would support this bill, and she said, "Absolutely. We don't have that power now. We would like to have that power," that power, again, being whatever they want to define it as. So this is really giving the municipalities in Ontario a chance to do something about the affordable housing crisis, which they don't have right now.

Where is this in place? Inclusionary zoning is in place in literally hundreds of jurisdictions across the United States—hundreds of jurisdictions in smaller municipalities in California alone. The Maryland experience is a particular case in point, where they've had it in place since 1976, and over 11,000 new units of affordable housing have been provided because of inclusionary zoning. Certainly in Great Britain and countries in Europe, inclusionary zoning is not a new thing. It is in place in a number of jurisdictions there. But the Americans really are leading us on this one. That's where it has really taken off.

Looking at the number of new builds that happened in the province of Ontario over the last while, we calculated that it could be responsible, even at a conservative 10% of all units, say, in developments over 50 units, for producing as many as 12,000 new units of affordable housing per year in Ontario. It wouldn't solve the crisis. It wouldn't house all those on the 142,000-family waiting list. But what it would do is provide housing without costing one tax dime. That's the strength and the power of inclusionary zoning.

What are the objections—because I have done the talk radio circuit on this bill, and I've had some, to be honest. There was a report done by the Canadian Home Builders' Association which, not surprisingly, took a contrary stand to this, because of course we are asking something of developers if municipalities decide to exercise their ability and this bill were to pass.

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Immediately, the Altus Clayton report was responded to by two experts, the foremost American expert on inclusionary housing, a man named David Rusk; and the foremost Canadian expert, an incredible man, Richard Drdla, whom we had here at Queen's Park speaking to this bill. They both immediately offered their critiques of that report and showed that, in practice, the concerns were really fallacious.

What were some of the concerns? One of the concerns I heard from a condo owner was that developers might pass on the cost, that if they're asked to set aside a certain number of units for affordable housing, the cost for those units would be borne by the other people who bought in that development. The answer to that is that it has never happened. In the hundreds of jurisdictions that have used inclusionary zoning bylaws to bring in affordable housing, it has never happened. It has never happened that housing has become more expensive. In fact—and this is due again to exigent historical circumstances, not necessarily to inclusionary zoning—the price of housing tends to come down, not go up. That doesn't happen. Really, history is the best answer to that.

The development needs to stay profitable. We are not arguing with the developers' need to stay profitable in this bill. In fact, we're saying that inclusionary zoning could help developers. In a down market, it could help developers because there are always those units that are difficult to sell. This way, the developer gets some money back. Also, as has been the practice in many municipalities, cost offsets are offered and zoning bylaws are changed to facilitate the development of affordable housing units. Municipalities have worked very well with developers on bringing these in. Hence, it has become the most popular way of providing affordable housing across the United States.

Again, this bill is not prescriptive. I want to emphasize that. All it does is get the OMB out of the equation. All it does is allow municipalities to bring in bills, if they so choose, that would make requirements of developers when it comes to affordable housing. They could be as conservative as 10%; they could be as generous as, say, in London, England—25%. It's completely up to the municipalities. That's why they love this bill, by and large. They would like to see this bill. Even if they don't act on it, they would like the opportunity to be able to. That's what this bill offers them.

It offers, actually, much, much more than that, I would hope. It also offers to those 142,000 families on the affordable housing waiting list hope. It offers some hope that, in the days when governments are running huge deficits, we can still move ahead, and dramatically so—conceivably—on the affordable housing file. We can move ahead without it costing taxpayers' dollars.

Developers already pay something, and I want to mention that as well, through section 37 in Toronto. They already pay, but that amount of money is negotiated between the councillor and the developer. It could go to beautifying a park or building a statue.

We don't need a statue; we need affordable housing units. We don't want to leave this up to the negotiation skills of individual councillors. We want to make this something that delivers on the promise that all municipalities have made about affordable housing and that this government has made about affordable housing.

Again, I'm bringing it back, I hope, for the same result. I emphasize that it's a modest bill. It simply gets the OMB out of the way of municipalities so that they can, if they so choose, move to enact inclusionary zoning laws. If they do, the result could be as powerful and dramatic as providing up to 12,000 new units of housing a year. These could be rent-to-own; they could be rental. It's not prescriptive. That's left up to the municipalities and possibly between them and their developers.

But what it would do is give us a ray of hope, a glimmer of hope in recessionary times, that we could answer the challenge that poverty has given us and that the need for housing, the national disaster of housing, has laid before us.

With the indulgence of the House, I hope you see fit to pass this yet again in second reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to comment for a few minutes on this bill. I'll be sharing my time with the member from Toronto Centre.

I'm going to approach this from the perspective of being a city councillor for 15 years, first in the city of Scarborough and then for six years at the city of Toronto. I found that in my experience, representing a part of Scarborough or various parts of Scarborough, depending on which election it was, all the way back to 1988, the best projects and the best developments occurred with the Planning Act that allowed for the section 37 so-called bonusing, so that if a developer wanted to build something and it was to be larger than the zoning bylaw permitted, we would sometimes allow it, and in exchange, we would get services—for example, an upgrade to a subway station or the LRT line or a new park built.

I can think of many projects all around Scarborough. I could take anybody on a tour and show them all the different things that have been created. In fact, through section 37, a developer wanted to put two towers in an area that was at the corner of Lawrence Avenue and Midland Avenue in Scarborough; this is the north side. The developer was given the approval, and, in return, the developer had to give the city of Scarborough over $1 million. That was banked for quite a while. During those days, interest rates were higher, and the money that we made from that was used to build a new community centre, retrofit an old library that desperately needed to be fixed up, and build a new swimming pool and an outdoor area for children in the community to use. Not only would the people who would eventually be living in this development have an option to use this new facility, but also residents who lived around the community.

I think the way it exists presently works well. I'm a little bit concerned when we start dangling in front of municipalities the option to impose the 25% affordable housing part for the Planning Act. The reason I have concern about this is that in the rare instance that you may get a council that's perhaps left-leaning, more left-wing or more socialist-minded, they may want to impose this on a good development, and if a developer comes along—and developers are not always bad guys. They work with cities, they work with planners and they work with communities. I found that most of the time they will co-operate. They don't want to go to the OMB either. What I discovered in the past when I was a councillor was that when I worked with developers, especially with members around the community and the experts at the city, through going back and forth, almost like a collective bargaining situation, we would continue to work with the developer until we worked out a proper plan. Many times, the developer would come down in size if it was too large or the developer would provide extra amenities, perhaps even repaving a road, which happened in the case of Tridel at Ellesmere and Birchmount in my former riding—the whole repaving of a road, adding extra classrooms to a school across the street and doing many other things.

My concern with putting in this 25% point is that developers are going to say, "If you're going to impose a 25% requirement on me for this development, I'm not going to bother building this," and it may not get built at all. All the possible benefits that would flow, which I just mentioned, from swimming pools to repairs to subway stations to roads, would all be left aside.

I've seen developers who have been scared away when too many conditions have been imposed on them for their approvals. They just walk away—and not just in residential developments, but also in commercial developments. We had one at Kennedy and the 401, which is in my former riding. It was a huge 40-acre parcel of land. All that was there was one store way in the middle of this place; it had been there for years. There were three different owners. We were able to sit down with them, with the community and the business association, and we were able to rebuild that whole area and provide for a very, very nice new commercial development that included a brand new theatre and all sorts of other needed things—stores and other shops—that make it one of the nicer places to shop in all of Scarborough. So we worked with the developers.

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I am concerned, again, with too much over-regulating or imposing too many conditions, and that's what this does. The intentions of the member who brought this forward are commendable, but my experience is that when you give a council extra powers, or certain other powers, maybe 90% will not abuse them but 10% probably will, and that's where my concern lies.

The Acting (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm pleased to speak to Bill 58, the Planning Amendment Act, which would enable municipalities to require inclusionary housing.

This, of course, as has already been noted by the member from Parkdale–High Park, is a bill that she introduced last year, 2009. The bill, unfortunately for her, was lost as a result of the Legislature proroguing, so she didn't have an opportunity to see her bill go to the Standing Committee on General Government for further discussion and debate and also, given the opportunity, to allow for some public input.

I think, as I listened already to the discussion that has taken place, there are obviously many reasons why we would want to support this. The need for affordable housing is—well, it's badly needed. We know that affordable housing has a tremendous impact on the quality of life for those people in particular who live in poverty. We should be ensuring that all people in this province have adequate housing.

So it is an important initiative and it really is, again, an indication of the member from Parkdale–High Park, who I think has made a lifetime commitment to making sure that everybody enjoys a quality of life that any one of us would hope to have. This one, in this case, is one where people would be provided with appropriate affordable housing.

Our party has traditionally supported housing and affordable housing, but we've usually done it by supporting rent subsidies and programs that lead to permanent independence rather than bricks and mortar as a solution to address the affordable housing needs in the province of Ontario. That has been our traditional approach. However, if you take a look at what is being proposed here by the member, inclusionary housing, as she has described it—really, she's saying it would "allow"; it's not mandatory. It does have the potential of making more units available to people in the province of Ontario.

However, there are debates and there are arguments on both sides of the issue. That's why, if the Legislature today decides to support this initiative, obviously it's a result of all of us agreeing that affordable housing is important to people in this province. We need to take action in order that people can have access to affordable housing. But it's obvious that a lot of further debate is going to be required. We need to get some feedback from people who are going to be impacted.

The member mentioned that the Ontario Home Builders' Association had opposed granting municipalities the planning authority to require inclusionary zoning. I know that that particular association feels that there's a high potential to cause the average price of new homes across the market in certain jurisdictions to increase, therefore reducing housing affordability and reducing the overall supply of new housing. According to the home builders' association, inclusionary zoning causes developers to pass on the cost differences that are created as a result of the social subsidy to home buyers and renters or rental owners, thereby making it less affordable for them to own or rent a home.

The member says that she has talked to municipalities, and it appears that those that she's talked to have indicated their support for her bill. She also talked about the fact that this does happen in the United States and that some of the concerns that have been expressed by those who have some opposition to this initiative, she doesn't feel would materialize.

At the end of the day, this House needs to make a decision about this particular piece of legislation. Do we want to pass it? Do we want to send it out for public debate and give those people who have concerns an opportunity to step forward and express them and also allow those people—and she indicated that she does have quite a bit of support from different municipalities—to appear before us? I guess what we need to do at the end of the day is, we need to use whatever means are available to us to ensure that all people in this province do have access to affordable housing.

I applaud the member from Parkdale–High Park for bringing forth this bill one more time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to take a few moments to support my colleague from Parkdale–High Park. I won't take my whole time because I know that she needs many more minutes to respond to some of the comments that have been made by others.

I am one of those who supports government involvement in terms of creating affordable housing because, based on my 20-year experience, if we don't do it, it doesn't get done. That's just the way it is, and that's an experience that I think is shared by many. But my suggestion of government doing it is not shared by all politicians, quite clearly, and different political parties will say, "We all have different approaches in terms of how we get there," and I understand that. But my view is that we, as a government, have a responsibility and an obligation to provide housing for people who simply do not have the means to get housing.

There are 140,000 people waiting for subsidized housing, and that list doesn't seem to diminish. In fact, it increases over time, which speaks to the need for government involvement; otherwise, we're not going to solve the need for housing that is affordable by those who don't earn a great deal of money. That's one component of the problem that needs to be addressed.

Ms. Witmer speaks about their way of wanting to solve the issue of affordability through supplements, and that's another tool that all governments have used as well. But it's yet one more tool; it's not the only way to get to affordable housing. In fact, we know that it doesn't do it in and of itself and that you've got to think of different ways to be able to provide affordable housing.

God knows, for the people who live in my riding of Trinity–Spadina, housing is no longer affordable. The people who come into my riding have to spend anywhere from $600,000 to $1 million to get a home, and these are the homes that the old Italians used to call shacks. They used to refer to Marchese still living in downtown Toronto: "You still live in that shack?" Our shacks are worth close to one million bucks, and they're probably more valuable by way of pecunia, by way of the cost,

then some of the Woodbridge homes. These shacks cost a great deal of money, and ordinary folks who have a modest income of $30,000, $40,000, $50,000 or $60,000 can't live in downtown Toronto anymore. They can't. So there is nothing really affordable any longer unless we create affordable housing for those who earn $40,000, $50,000 or $60,000. And the majority of income earners are in that middle range, where family income is about $50,000 on average. That's the range.

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I know that families are making huge sacrifices to put every penny into that home, whatever home, whether it is a condominium or a house. Every penny goes into paying down that mortgage. The new immigrants are finding it more and more difficult to buy a home. Those that do, live together, both with their children or grandchildren or brothers and sisters, because that's the only way you can afford to buy a home; you can't do it on your own anymore.

Housing has become incredibly expensive, and with the loss of thousands and thousands of good-paying manufacturing jobs, people are working in places where the salaries are no longer that great. So now what we're building is a whole lot of condominiums, and that's okay. I've got 40% of people in my riding living in condominiums. In the riding next to me on my right, 60% of the people live in condominiums, and on and on. In Toronto, we have 40%—not in Toronto—we do have 40% of all condominiums in Ontario in Toronto; that was the point I wanted to make. We're building a whole lot of condominiums, and that has become the rental option for many, in fact. Half of the condominiums are rented. So it has become another opportunity for people to live: instead of in rental buildings, in condominiums.

The fact of the matter is that this bill presented by my colleague from Parkdale–High Park gives municipalities that want to do this another tool to get at affordability. The bill will have to leave 10% of the housing aside for affordable housing. Let the cities determine what that affordability level is.

Clearly, we're not breaking new ground. It's not as if the member is doing something that is so totally new that you've got to be afraid of it. She speaks to the fact that there are many municipalities doing it all over the world, and to the south our neighbours are doing it in many states. So we're not breaking a whole lot of new ground. This is a tool that I believe is something that cities want, and if cities want it, or municipalities want it, let's give them that power to be able to bring in inclusionary zoning that allows for more affordable housing to be had.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Toronto Centre.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: It's a great privilege to stand up and support this today. I want to commend the members for Parkdale–High Park and Kitchener–Waterloo because I think they presented two very logical arguments for this.

This is a very easy piece of legislation for me to support, for a couple of reasons. One, I ran on this. I made this a commitment in my election literature in the by-election, and I know that it's one of the reasons that the folks in Toronto Centre sent me here.

Number 2, I actually had the pleasure of being a keynote speaker at the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario's annual conference. I was asked to speak to them about—this was last year—innovative new ways of doing city and town building. I talked extensively in my presentation about these market mechanisms.

The member for Kitchener–Waterloo very articulately put forward the need, which is interesting, because I, being a Liberal—although we've heard from a New Democrat and a Conservative—we all have recognized one fundamentally powerful tool, which is the marketplace. This is actually a market mechanism for building housing that transcends any kind of ideology. It is quite rightly well used in the United States. We're a "big tent" party, which is one of the reasons I am a Liberal, and I find it very exciting because I always go to a caucus meeting where there's a great diversity of opinion, and it tests you and forces you to sharpen your arguments.

This mechanism is really critically important, too. I've also had experience. In the municipality I was mayor of, we tried twice to get from our provincial government a similar mechanism and were unable to. I say this in a completely non-partisan way. That happened to be an NDP government, and I think they have a new Premier now who's more predisposed to this. We did get tax-increment financing and a number of brownfield and tax incentives, which we basically used as a backdoor mechanism for inclusionary housing and inclusionary zoning.

Minneapolis has been extremely successful in this, both under Democratic and Republican mayors. So again, I think there's lots of wide ground to do this.

Why is this important? The member from Trinity–Spadina made a point, and I very much agree with him. He talked about the problem of affordability of housing. It's more than a housing crisis.

David Hulchanski's work at the University of Toronto has shown that we've lost half of our middle-income neighbourhoods in urban Toronto and we've seen a doubling of our low-income neighbourhoods. I would say to my colleagues—and I would ask for as many of my colleagues in my party to support this as possible.

One of the biggest determinants of people's net wealth when they retire is their ability to own a home. It is very hard—I would almost say that it's impossible—in Ontario today to retire with any kind of economic security, whether or not you have a pension, if you don't own your home. One of the biggest differences we have going forward in the next 10 years is the ability of people to own their home and new Canadians to own their home. We have to create market mechanisms for affordable rental and affordable housing.

I'm very proud of the record of the McGuinty government. We have 35,000 units under construction right now in Toronto. That's about half of what the need is. We have to double the pace. We need better solutions, and we should be listening to them, no matter where they

come from. When they come from thoughtful people in the opposition, we should bring those forward.

I know we have our housing consultation going on right now. I know there's a lot of enthusiasm amongst my colleagues in the Liberal Party for many of these new ideas. In Winnipeg, when I was mayor, we built about 4,500 affordable housing units—not one built by government—directly through these kinds of market mechanisms. They were run by community groups. Some of them were built by the private sector, but they simply mean that the bounty of condos that you see going on in most large urban centres in Ontario right now could be one of the engines producing affordable housing. They're simply not—beyond the growth in the tax base that they bring to local municipalities—doing that because we don't have a mechanism.

Some of my colleagues have argued that you can't trust city councils to do this. City councils aren't appointed boards. They're democratically elected. If the people in Scarborough, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Cornwall or Strathroy don't like this, they can vote out their city council.

The only criticism I would have—and it's not really criticism—is that this has to be part of a larger housing strategy. In some communities, for this to work there'll have to be tax incentives and tax write-offs for community non-profit groups and developers. There will have to be some greater powers for land assembly in communities to protect price. I think all of those things are possible, but they should not be things that hold up a sensible step forward in this process.

One of the things I learned very early on in politics is that if you don't worry about who gets credit for things, you can get a lot more done. I can't imagine a group of folks that isn't going to benefit from this. This is actually one of the ways out of the recession that I think is totally consistent with the principles of—

Interjection.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: This is one of the things that's most consistent with the principles of my party, which is that you can't get out of this recession in government by hacking and slashing services and diminishing the role of government. You can't get out of this by building the tax burden. So you have to build the tax base. These market mechanisms—and I cut taxes every year I was mayor and built more affordable housing than any other municipality at the time, and I'm very proud of that record. To do both of the things was through these tax-based building mechanisms that create wealth, add value and increase the property tax revenues in municipalities—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. Further debate.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a harmonious last day here. I think that's the tone I'm picking up here from pretty well all the speakers today.

I think the member from Trinity–Spadina has often and eloquently spoken of affordability of accommodation, and it's not new for him to speak that way. I can say that our member from Kitchener–Waterloo is also well-known for being compassionate. The member from Toronto Centre has commented on that, and I think that's an appropriate acknowledgment.

All members I believe would recognize, as the member from Toronto Centre said, the importance of shelter. It's arguably almost a conundrum, really; it's a contradiction. I'll tell you why.

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I served on council. I served during the time of the NDP, actually, and they had a requirement for affordable housing and a percentage of housing of certain density—regulations. The issue then became the development charge portion of it. The development charge is what we used to call a lot levy in the old days.

The more people you cram into less space, there are other issues that become evident. Some of them are social, and they're real; they're are not something imagined. In parts of Toronto, we see that the density equates to other social inequities, if you will. It also requires the community to provide a lot more common services.

I can recall, respectfully, the member from Toronto Centre, who was the mayor of Winnipeg at one time, and he was the lead person—CEO, I guess—of the Urban Development Institute. When I was the critic, I did meet with you, and I did appreciate the informed opinions that you gave me. I didn't agree with them all, obviously, but I did respect them. You are far more educated in that field than I am, except for the time I served on council.

No one disputes the need for affordable housing. The conundrum or contradiction is: If you build a single-family residence in Durham that's a semi or link home, the development charges themselves are about $30,000 to $40,000. That's when you get the building permit. You pay $40,000. You put the $40,000 on a 30-year mortgage; that's going to cost you almost a half a million dollars for the development charge over the 30-year life of the mortgage.

We talk about affordability in housing. Neither the landlord nor the tenant can actually afford the cost of inadequate infrastructure. What's the deficit in our infrastructure in Ontario? It's staggering. It's $13 billion in Toronto. This is future debt, debt on the pages here, of decaying and decrepit infrastructure.

My concerns now are these: If you have a co-operative—and I'm more supportive of the co-operative solution, to be very honest with you. People have a vested interest in and concern for the care of the property. I'd be supportive of those solutions. I want that to be clear. But there again, even the maintenance—now they'll have to charge the HST. So everything government does costs more and affects the cost of operating even the most simple complexes. If there's a recreation component, there'll now be a charge on that as well.

You look in Toronto: The biggest problem in housing now—the condos were a good buy because the capital costs were low. They were also taxed differently. They weren't taxed as multi-residential; they were taxed as residential. Multi-residential taxes are five times more

expensive than residential tax, but the tenants don't know it because it's buried in their rent.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: In Ottawa, it might be two, but there's a good number that are five. That rate is set by the municipal level of government.

Not only that; the issues are even more complicated. Now the biggest issue in condominiums is the condo charge. I know people personally—they're not wealthy people—who are paying over $1,000 a month in condo fees in Toronto. The condo fees are the reserve funds and the built-in common service costs; it could be the pool, the tennis court, whatever it is they might have.

Affordable housing is almost, as I said, a contradiction. Even seniors in their homes today are euchred. If you're a senior in a home in Toronto, you aren't paying the—in my area, I just sold my home.

We have five kids; we are a modest, average family. My taxes—I live in the country and I have my own well and my own septic system—were $7,000. That's affordable? In a few years, my taxes would have been $1,000 a month. To pay $12,000 in taxes I've got to make $24,000 because half of your income is taxed, at certain levels.

Affordable housing: I agree. Find a solution. Housing isn't free. Somebody's paying for it somewhere. It could be done through tax measures. That would be my solution: Invest in co-ops, give them low-interest loans, and also allow seniors to have their taxes frozen. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has made that suggestion in the past.

There are solutions. They're not easy. I applaud the member for bringing them forward because shelter is a fundamental—some would argue it's a right to have safe, affordable shelter in your life; somewhere to call your home, your community or your sanctuary. So I commend you for bringing them forward, and I believe that we find it difficult to argue against those kinds of—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you to all of the members who spoke.

I'll start with Durham first. Certainly this bill isn't the entire solution, and I think I made that clear. This is simply, I would argue, a necessary part of the solution. The member from Durham talked about co-ops. Absolutely, I support co-ops. We should support co-ops. We should also support this. What this does is it allows municipalities—there is nothing prescriptive about it—if they so choose, to go this route.

The member from Scarborough Southwest was arguing that we don't want to impose something on developers. Well, quite frankly, right now the OMB, an unelected body, makes these decisions for us instead of allowing our elected bodies, our municipalities, to make these decisions for us. That's all I'm arguing.

Let's put it in the broader context. If you have a homeless person in your community, it costs you $45,000 to $55,000 a year to keep them homeless. Is that economically feasible? Does that make sense, either morally, ethically or economically? No, it doesn't. So, obviously we have to move on this, we have to do something.

Under-housing costs money. We know that it's one of those determinants of health. If you're under-housed, you get sick, you use the health care system more, you use the justice system more. It costs more. It costs us to have people improperly housed.

It could even save developers money. How do I say that? The member from Scarborough Southwest talked about $1 million being negotiated from one developer. Well, think about a slight change in density zoning, for example. Say you have a condo developer who is going to be putting up a 100-unit infrastructure. If you allowed him to put up an extra floor, another 10 units, and demanded of him 10 units, 10% affordable housing, he's actually going to come out ahead of having to negotiate section 37 dollars. He'd actually come out ahead with that one zoning change, and he'd have 10 units of affordable housing—and you would never know which ones they are. That's the joy of mixed-use housing. Look at the St. Lawrence Market development. It's the model for the world. You don't know what's a co-op, you don't know what's affordable, you don't know what has market-driven rates. It's a wonderful place to live for everyone. That's what we're talking about. That's what inclusionary zoning provides.

I also wanted to say the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario—I forgot to mention them the first time around—all support this. They wrote a letter, and I'm just going to quote one line from it. They say, "It is our belief that conditional or inclusionary zoning powers for affordable housing purposes are a necessary tool to enable municipalities to effectively implement the provincial policy statement and growth plan objectives." That's their recommendation.

So it's not only municipalities across Ontario that would love to be able to look at this, even if they decide not to implement it—because, again, I suggest to all my colleagues that it's not prescriptive. This is simply a bill that gets the OMB out of the way so that if a municipality would like to do this, they can.

I want to particularly thank my friend from Toronto Centre because I think he has got it absolutely right: Without inclusionary zoning, we're never going to get there. The cost of housing, to go back to the member from Durham, is so outrageous these days, particularly—the member from Trinity–Spadina pointed this out eloquently, as always—in the centre of the city now that we need help wherever we can get it. The government alone stepping in and doing new builds cannot do it anymore with those kinds of land prices. We need to start looking at some solutions that don't require only taxes to pay for everything. This is a way of doing it. This is a way of asking of developers that they become productive members of the community, which, quite frankly, many of them want to be, and simply provide—instead of this negotiation, section 37—affordable housing.

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It could be rental; it could be rent-to-own. In fact, rent-to-own seems to be the most popular version of this,

when you look at the hundreds of jurisdictions in the States. Let's face it, it's what most people want. Most people want to own their own unit, own their own home. This allows them to do it. Again, you can imagine, it might cost developers less. It might even help them in a down market get rid of unsellable or what they see as unsellable units. Those units are needed; they're needed for affordable housing. This allows them to get into that business.

We know that you need an income of at least $75,000 a year to buy a house now. How many people make that in anywhere like a large municipality? So we have to step in. This is for our children's sake; this is for our grandchildren's sake. This is for those who, even with two incomes, cannot afford to buy a home. This allows them to get into the market and, as my friend from Toronto Centre said, build up some equity to actually look after their families with. So ultimately, it's about our children.

Such a simple little bill, a simple little suggestion—not prescriptive. It's simply really asking of this government that they allow municipalities the option—an option that has been picked up, I mentioned, in over 100 jurisdictions in California alone, where they've produced more than 34,000 units of affordable housing by using this method alone.

We know it works in other jurisdictions. We know it works across the States. We know it works in Europe and in England. It could work here too. Thank you Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We will be voting on this in about 100 minutes.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Don't I get two minutes?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I thought we were going to do that automatically.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Yes, you have one minute and 40 seconds.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's all right.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Okay.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Jim Wilson: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario act to help farmers by supporting reforms to the national AgriStability program at this year's meeting of the federal and provincial Ministers of Agriculture, and by acting to create a comprehensive business risk management program, jointly funded by farmers and governments, as presented to the province of Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition, and that regardless of any other level of government, the provincial share of the business risk management program be in place for the 2009 production year, which is currently being marketed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Wilson has moved private members' notice of motion number 33. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to present this resolution on behalf of not just the farm families in my riding of Simcoe–Grey, but farm families of some 57,000 farms across the province of Ontario. The fact of the matter is that Ontario farmers across many commodity groups are suffering during this economic downturn. Even before this downturn, we had problems in various sectors, but now they have become much more widespread.

There are, of course, many reasons for the current situation, including the rise of the value of the Canadian dollar, mandatory country-of-origin labelling in the US and the drop in consumer demand stemming from the economic downturn, to name just a few. But while governments have bailed out autos and banks, for Ontario farmers there has been no infrastructure program or any other form of additional relief. Most of the same farm programs that were in place before the downturn are there, but evidence shows they are only part of what is needed.

As the 2010 growing season gets underway in Ontario, the news for our farmers is not good. Just recently, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada released the department's farm income forecast for 2010, and that forecast underlines what I have been hearing from farmers in my riding. For 2009, agriculture in Ontario had a negative $50-million net income. The forecast for 2010 predicts the loss of a further $500 million. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is forecasting a decline of 15% in the net operating income for the average Canadian farm compared to the 2004-to-2008 average. Grains and oilseeds will be down 35% from 2009 levels, vegetable producers will see declines of 26% from the 2004-to-2008 average, and fruit producers will see declines of 15%. Already hard hit, cattle producers will see further declines of 5%. Hog producers' incomes will fall relative to both the 2004-to-2008 averages as well as the 1999-to-2003 averages. Even the relatively well-off supply-managed sectors will see expense growth outpacing income growth for poultry, egg and dairy farms.

The fact that so many sectors of the agriculture industry are hurting leads to a point that I want to emphasize to those members who may be from urban ridings, and to anyone who may be listening to this debate who may not be familiar with agriculture in Ontario: While we all know that Ontario is Canada's leading industrial and manufacturing sector, very few people from our cities know that Ontario is Canada's leading agricultural producer as well. Not only does Ontario have Canada's largest farm sector, we are Canada's most diverse agricultural producer. Those two facts mean that the Ontario government and we, as legislators, need to look at agriculture in a way that is different from most other provinces.

In provinces such as Alberta and Saskatchewan, agriculture is important because it makes up a larger share of the provincial economy. But because there is not as much agricultural diversity in those provinces, in terms of government policy they only need to focus on specific

parts of the industry, mainly the grains and oilseed sectors and cattle. Quebec and BC have fairly diverse sectors as well, but they're not as large as Ontario.

Ontario is also in a different position from the other provinces because most of Canada's food processors are located here. Ontario agriculture supports more than just the farm families on our 57,000 farms; it supports thousands of jobs in this province's urban centres. The agriculture ministry's web site will tell you that about 3,000 food and beverage processing companies, including international industry giants, employ approximately 114,000 people in Ontario. With further processing and associated activity, that number exceeds 600,000 jobs.

Moving from the corporate sector to the consumer, we need to recognize that one of the recent green consumer trends is to eat local. Eating local reduces the energy and pollution associated with getting food to the table. It also gives us fresher food as well. With our agricultural diversity, Ontario farmers can go a long way to providing our consumers with a huge range of local products. We just need to ensure that those farmers can stay in business.

I hope that this brief outline of Ontario agriculture serves to explain why we as legislators should take seriously the situation in which our agricultural sector finds itself. Because of both size and diversity here in Ontario, we can see whether or not farm support programs are working effectively to help farmers in all sectors or in just a few. If those programs are not working effectively, agriculture is an important enough sector here for us to take action—and to take action on our own, if necessary.

Today we know that those programs are not working effectively. Something is missing. We know because that is the word we're getting from our producers. Members of this House from rural areas know because they see it every time they go home to their ridings. The situation is so serious that our major farm organizations have united, not just to tell us that a problem exists but to work out a potential solution to the problem.

Ontario, because of its food diversity, has a great many farm commodity organizations as well as general farm organizations. In normal times, it's not unusual for some commodities to be experiencing some difficulty for a variety of reasons. In such normal times, the commodity organization voices its concerns to the government and to any affected elected representatives, and a process of seeking a resolution begins. Usually it works fairly well, and other than maybe a question or two in this House, government staff work with the affected parties to achieve some sort of solution to the problem of the day.

In this instance, however, something else has happened. The problem is severe enough that our two largest general farm organizations, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, have joined together with the major non-supply-managed commodity groups to form the Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition. This group includes the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, Ontario Grains and Oilseeds, Ontario Pork, the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency and Ontario Veal. These are clearly not normal times.

These organizations that make up the Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition, as diverse as they are, have identified the gap that exists in existing farm programs and they have identified a way to deal with it. They have proposed a business risk management program that will provide a greater amount of predictability to farm incomes. The basic structure of the program is not new. Each party in this House has administered a similar program while in government. The basic structure: In essence, the business risk management program will cover the difference, if any, between the average market price and a floor price based on the cost of producing each commodity. The farmers will pay a premium covering 30% of the program costs in order to participate. Governments will pay the remaining 70% share. Farmers who do not sign up will not benefit.

The farm groups that worked on this proposal have even identified how it will link with existing national farm programs. For this, there is precedent in Quebec's ASRA program. The work done by the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition has also led to a proposal which is less susceptible to trade, countervail and anti-dumping actions.

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Currently, the national AgriStability program is intended to protect farmers from serious income loss. It kicks in when a farm's income falls more than 15% below that farm's reference margin. The program's major shortcoming is the fact that during periods of prolonged difficulty, the reference margin itself sinks, and it becomes more difficult to trigger assistance. Also, because of the calculations involved in determining these margins, there is no way of knowing in advance what sort of assistance a farmer will get, which in itself affects a farmer's ability to plan for the next year.

Because the business risk management program payments will contribute to farm income and would do so in a more timely manner, this will either reduce the amount of the later AgriStability payment or possibly eliminate it completely. AgriStability would remain a national program, but it would be more of a last resort program, to kick in for a really bad year which sees a serious drop in a farm's income.

I don't propose to get involved in a detailed discussion about national farm support programming policy or how that policy is made. It is, however, important to be aware of a few important points. In Canada, agriculture, constitutionally, is the responsibility of both the federal and provincial governments. Today, national farm programs are worked out by federal and provincial ministers, and funding is most often shared on a 60-40 basis between the federal government and the provinces. Policy and program development is usually led by the federal government and those provinces with a larger stake in their agricultural sectors.

But we need to realize that this is a consensus-driven process. Because of that, it's entirely possible for that process to be slow. The same consensus process also makes it possible for a province with a lesser stake or a different interest in its own agriculture to hold up progress at the national level. Ontario, however, has a large stake in agriculture—in fact, the largest. For us in this case, waiting is counterproductive.

Regardless of the reason for slow progress on the national front, it is not necessary for Ontario to wait for a national consensus agreement. Legally and constitutionally, we can quite easily proceed on our own, either with a stand-alone provincial program, such as Quebec's ASRA, or by announcing that we will fund our 40% share immediately of a future or potential national program.

In my opinion, the Agriculture Canada forecast shows there is justification for a national program and that Ontario should be at the forefront, fighting for that national program. But if that's not going to be the case, if some provinces feel it's not right for them or if the federal government has other priorities, then we should be making plans to proceed on our own. That is also the opinion of the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition. The OASC has asked the province to fund its share of the business risk management program before there is any commitment from the federal government.

Farmers would also pay their premium to match the provincial share. And of course, the payment farmers receive will only be 40% of the total provided for by the program model. It's important to recognize that our farmers strongly believe that this 40% will be an improvement over what is actually currently in place. It can provide some of the relief and some of the confidence that is needed.

What we need right now is word from the minister and this government about the steps that the province will take to help farmers and to help implement this proposal. I would hope that the government will support both my resolution and the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition proposal. This resolution is neither hostile nor contentious.

Since the OASC presented these reforms to our farm programs, the government has not responded with any different reform proposals, so I would hope that OASC's reforms are being looked at favourably. However, the time for review is rapidly passing, and the time for action has arrived, if this program will apply to the 2009 crop, which is currently being marketed. Our farmers need to know soon, if not today. After the hard work they have devoted to developing the business risk management program, they deserve a clear answer.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Howard Hampton: First of all, let me thank my Conservative colleague for bringing forward this motion today.

Unfortunately, in this Legislature, agricultural issues, food issues and farm issues are not debated as often as they should be and do not receive the attention that they should receive, so I think this discussion is very timely.

It is also timely because the reality is that the farm sector in Ontario is facing a very difficult time. More and more farmers are leaving the farm. Young people who have thought about taking up farming in too many cases turn down the opportunity. More and more families, in order to sustain their farms, have to work off the farm; in some cases, both husband and wife are working off-farm to try to support the ongoing activities on the farm. Talking to almost every farm organization, whether it be the OFA, the cattlemen, Ontario Pork Producers or fruit and vegetable producers—the reality is, we're facing a very serious problem in the province.

The idea of a risk management strategy is not new. This has been something that has been talked about—even promised—over the last five years. In the run-up to the last provincial election, there was much discussion about a risk management strategy. I think farmers truly believed that we were going to see a risk management strategy.

I'm cognizant of the fact that everyone who may be listening or watching may not know what we mean by a risk management strategy, so let me try to describe it this way. Any time you produce anything, there are always risks. There is risk, for example, that if you're producing cars, suddenly the bottom will fall out of the car market, and we've had a recent history of that. If you're in the production of natural resources, there are always risks in terms of finding the natural resource or being able to process the natural resource. An oil company called British Petroleum is dealing with one of those risks as we speak. They found the oil but they were not exactly capable in terms of getting the oil to processing in a way that was safe.

We expect farmers in the modern world to carry all kinds of risk. Because many farm products are sold internationally, we expect farmers to deal with things like currency risk—the fact that the currency in the market you sell in may suddenly devalue as compared to the Canadian dollar, in which case you are not going to get as much for your product.

We expect farmers to carry energy risk. The fact of the matter is, farming in most areas or aspects is a very energy-intensive business. As we all know, when the price of gas goes from, say, $1 a litre to $1.20 a litre—and there are other associated costs with fertilizers and other inputs—that can have a very big impact on farmers.

We also expect farmers to deal with things like climate or weather risk. I would argue that it's becoming less and less weather risk and more and more climate risk in the current state of things.

Many major corporations simply would not carry that kind of risk. They have the economic power and clout to pass that risk on to somebody else. One could argue that British Petroleum was in effect saying, "Oh, let the fishermen and the tourist resorts in the Gulf of Mexico worry about the risk of an oil spill." But farmers, because they tend to be small, individual producers, can't pass

this risk on to anyone else. They don't have the economic power or clout to do it.

If we want to have good food, secure food and food that we can have some confidence that it is what it says it is—by the way, we've seen some situations lately where people could not be assured of the quality of food, especially when it was produced somewhere else and produced under conditions that were not that healthy. But if we want to have good, healthy food and food that we can count on, it seems to me that as a society we cannot expect farmers to carry all this risk. We've got to share some of it.

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One of the other things that has happened over the last couple of years is that, sad to say, I think there's been a game of Ping-Pong between this provincial government and the federal government. Both say, in one way or another, that there needs to be a better strategy or a strategy for risk management. But then they say, "You first." "No, no, I insist. You first." "No, no. You first, and we'll follow." And this is a game that's going back and forth. Meanwhile, farmers across the province face a more difficult situation, growing worse almost every day.

To get back to this motion: I think that everyone in this House should support the strategy that "the government of Ontario act to help farmers by supporting reforms to the national AgriStability program at this year's meeting of the federal and provincial Ministers of Agriculture"—that meeting is going to happen, I believe, on July 7 or 8—"and by acting to create a comprehensive business risk management program, jointly funded by farmers and governments, as presented to the province of Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition...." I think everyone could support that.

The next part, I think, is controversial: "and that regardless of any other level of government"—in other words, regardless of the federal government—"the provincial share of the business risk management program be in place for the 2009 production year, which is currently being marketed." That may cause some of my Liberal colleagues a problem. I understand that. But it seems to me that if it causes you a problem, then we're back into this game of, "Oh, I insist. You first." "No, no, I insist. You first." Meanwhile, farmers are not being served.

Let me try to be helpful here. Any risk management strategy is going to take a couple of years to get off the ground. That's the reality. You do not create these programs overnight and have them up and running a week later—not even a month later; not even six months later. It will probably take a couple of years to make this happen. So what's to be done? I agree; the federal government should be a partner in this, but I think Ontario has to do something to indicate its willingness to act. Given that it's going to take about two years to get this up and running—a year at the minimum—I think what Ontario should say, going to the table in July, is that Ontario is prepared to provide some interim money as a good-faith gesture that this is going to happen.

How much money would that entail? I'm not exactly sure. I've heard figures of $100 million. When I think about this place recently, I could think of a number of ways where $100 million was put down the drain. I can think of a number of ways, just in the last six months, where that has happened, so I don't think this is some gargantuan undertaking. If the result of the federal-provincial conference is that the federal government walks away and says, "We're not going to do anything," that will be laid bare for everyone to see what's going on. But as it stands now, to continue to have a game where everyone agrees there's a problem but everyone says, "Oh, I insist you go first," "No, no, no, you go first," "No, no, no, you go first," is just not sincere, and it's doing absolutely nothing to help farmers deal with an economic crisis that is growing serious week by week.

So I think all members should support this government in going to the table on July 7 and 8 and saying to the federal government, "We need your participation. We need a 60% participation from you in this strategy." But I also think, because there's this issue of the 2009 production year, that this government should say, "Between now and July 7, this government is prepared to put $100 million on the table as interim coverage for the help that farmers need now," and to say to the federal government, "We're serious."

If the government did this, if the government was prepared to step up like that, I think we would get somewhere. But my fear is that this continuing game of "You first," "No, no, I insist; you first," "No, no, we insist; you first," is going to continue in a very unproductive game of Ping-Pong.

In the interests of seeing people's economic livelihoods have some stability and some semblance of a future, in the interests of sustaining literally tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of good jobs in this province, something has to happen in the near future. If this government doesn't feel that $100 million is within its capacity, then do something which is within your capacity. If you think $40 million is a good-faith gesture, then do that kind of good-faith gesture. But I have to say to you, to continue this game of Ping-Pong back and forth between federal and provincial governments while the real issues are getting lost is not helpful to any of us.

I note that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is here today. He would recognize this, because we've been playing Ping-Pong between the federal and provincial governments with First Nation issues for years and years—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to rise to speak on this important issue for our farming community, because we know that business risk management programs are important to the agri-food sector. We know that when they work, they help farmers address situations that are outside their control, and we know that the agri-food sector is a sector that's very important to Ontario's economy. That's why our government has provided over

$1.8 billion since 2003 in farm income support and stabilization programming. That included $55 million announced in June 2007, $110 million announced at the 2006 plowing match and another $125 million, which was announced in the spring of 2006—substantial investment in farm stabilization.

I think one of the first crises that we faced here was the BSE crisis, an international crisis where the bottom fell out of the beef market. When that happened, our government provided $95.95 million plus an additional $35.88 million in CAIS program advances to help the agri-food industry deal with the BSE crisis. Combined with the federal funding, Ontario's livestock industry has actually received over $398 million for BSE programs and CAIS program advances.

We've introduced the buy-Ontario strategy to try and make sure that Ontario consumers know about the wonderful quality of Ontario food. In fact, we've invested $65 million in promoting Ontario foods and committed to investing an additional $40 million over the next two years.

We've invested significantly in rural economic development—a program that's called RED—over $97 million since 2003. That has generated $759 million in new economic activity in rural Ontario. I was happy to host Minister Mitchell in Guelph just a few weeks ago, where we announced $1 million to get the initial design work up and running on a partnership between Guelph Hydro and Cargill, the meat producers, taking the waste products that are left over from meat processing and using those waste products as part of a digestion process that will in turn drive localized hydro generating—a really exciting program.

We've also worked with the Ontario cattle, hog and horticultural industries. In December 2007, we announced $150 million in assistance to those sectors; of this, $130 million going directly to Ontario cattle, hog and hort producers, with the remaining $20 million going to various future sustainability issues. As of April 15, just a month or so ago, approximately 97% of those cheques had been cashed, for a total of $127 million.

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So I just want to make it clear that this government has been very proactive in supporting the farm sector in the province of Ontario.

In fact, referring back to the comments by the member from Kenora–Rainy River, this government did go first in the back-and-forth between Ontario and the federal government over the whole business of business risk management. In 2007, we made the financial commitment to pilot a business risk management program on the model that we're now talking about with the grain and oilseed sector. That was a very successful program. It was so successful that many of the other sectors came together and said, "We want to see if we can extend that." The problem is that the federal government has been nowhere to be seen in all of this. In fact the traditional cost-sharing on this is 60% federal government and 40% provincial government, and that 60% has been spectacularly missing.

If you look at the farm sector, the farm sector has understood this. In the Barrie Examiner—not too far from your riding, Madam Speaker—Bette Jean Crews, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, wrote just a week ago:

"Farm organizations have presented calculations showing a need for improved risk management programs, but our federal government has shown strong resistance to the implementation of such programs. They don't seem to acknowledge the need for changes to existing risk management programs—changes that should have been in place in 2008....

"This is why the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the group of non-supply-managed commodity organizations have joined forces into the Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition (OASC) to try to impress upon the federal government the need for specific changes to existing risk management programs."

This motion that is before us today, as the member from Kenora–Rainy River noted, lets the federal government off the hook. It explicitly says that Ontario should pay up even if the federal government is missing in action. I don't know about you, but if I'm negotiating, I don't say to the person I'm negotiating with, "I think I'll give you 2%. That's what's on the table. But if you don't like that, I'll give you 5%." If I'm trying to buy a piece of property, I don't say, "You want to charge me $1 million. I'm offering you $800,000, but if you don't want that, I'll give you the $1 million anyway." That's what this motion says: "We'd like to negotiate with you, but go ahead; do it your way. We'll put the whole bill on Ontario." I am not willing to support putting the whole bill on Ontario again, because we already went that way first.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to support the resolution brought forward by my colleague from Simcoe–Grey. I want to commend him for standing up for farmers, not just in his riding but across Ontario, who desperately need this program. I hope that all members of this Legislature will support the resolution and, by doing so, support Ontario's farmers.

Earlier today, I had the pleasure of meeting with representatives from the Ontario Cattlemen's Association. I want to recognize some of them who are here in the gallery to support this resolution: Dan Darling; Matt Bowman; John Gillespie; Gerald Rollins; John Lunn; and Curtis Royal, president of the cattlemen's association. Also, we have Brian Gilroy, president of the fruit and vegetable growers in the province of Ontario. They're all here supporting this resolution because at the 40% they are prepared—they think that's a good start, and then the federal government can come in at that.

They told us about the desperate situation that cattle farmers across Ontario are facing in a meeting I had with them this morning. Last year alone, Ontario cattle farmers lost $200 million.

We know that the current programs aren't working for farmers. One of the challenges with ag stability is that if

you have a number of bad years in a row, your reference margin gradually declines such that you can't trigger the program. I remember one hog farmer who lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in one year and didn't qualify for support because he had a number of bad years prior to that. Three times he's lost money; the fourth time, he goes bankrupt.

That's why farmers are asking for a cost-of-production program. Under the present system, you can see that the programs are not working just by looking at the amount of money the government budgets for direct support to our farmers. Last year, we discovered that this government had quietly reallocated $82 million away from that direct support. When I asked the Minister of Agriculture in this House about it, she said it was because the programs were demand-driven and farmers weren't qualifying for the support. Anyone who has spoken to Ontario's farmers knows that many of our agriculture industries are in crisis: our hog farmers. The cattle farmers are losing money on every animal they raise, and our fruit and vegetable growers are struggling with high input costs. The need for support is urgent, so if farmers aren't qualifying for the support program, there is clearly a problem with the support program.

However, instead of fixing the program to get the money out to the farmers in need, the McGuinty government just cut the amount of money they were budgeting for supporting farmers. Last year they budgeted $325 million; this year it's $180 million, a cut of $144 million.

The minister claims that she will support a business risk management program when the federal government does. The reality is that she's using that as an excuse. If you look at the estimates, it's clear: She hasn't allocated any money for that this year. She's going to ask for the federal government's 60%, but she hasn't allocated a nickel in the provincial budget to deal with this if they were to agree with it. Farmers don't need a Minister of Agriculture to be a lobbyist; they need her to take action. They need a champion at the cabinet table.

The Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition has done everything the government has asked them to do. They came together to speak with one voice. They put forward one proposal. In response, this government has done absolutely nothing but make excuses.

On March 5 the coalition wrote to Premier McGuinty. They said, "Ontario farmers need an immediate commitment from your government to provide the provincial investment needed to stabilize and sustain our businesses. This commitment cannot hinge on federal support being given first." But the McGuinty government continues to make excuses.

In a few weeks, there will be another federal-provincial-territorial agriculture meeting. Ontario can lead by example by going to that meeting and by making a commitment now to create a business risk management program and give Ontario farmers what they need to survive. Or this government can continue to make excuses while our farmers sink further into debt and our agriculture industry declines.

I encourage all members of this House to support this resolution and send a clear signal that they understand the dire situation on Ontario farms and the urgent need to help our farmers. I ask all people to forget about what others are not doing but to do what other provinces are doing. The province of Alberta and the province of Quebec are individually, without extra help from the federal government, supporting their farmers. I think the Ontario government should do that for our farmers.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's a pleasure to rise to speak to this motion from the member from Simcoe-Gray.

First of all, I'd like to thank the beef farmers for being here today. Along with the minister, a number of us met them this morning in the caucus room, room 247, to share some breakfast and go over their needs. Coming from a rural community, although I'm not a farmer, I do understand the needs and how important this industry is to our province. We talked this morning about how with the shrinking of the auto sector, this industry is probably now one of the biggest industries we have in the province of Ontario. I want to thank them for that and once again for their barbecue outside today.

I have the opportunity on a regular basis to meet with my local farming organization, along with the Northumberland Federation of Agriculture, my local folks, to talk about these things. Of course, it's not new that we're talking about it here in the House today. We've been talking for a long time. I appreciate them for supplying that type of fresh meat.

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But let me talk about the motion. I'm going to stand here today and say that I'd be prepared to support this motion if a few words were deleted. I'll just quote those words: "regardless of any other level of government" support. I'm prepared to support this if the member is brave enough not to protect his federal cousins and get them off the hook.

I stand here to be counted today. I will support it if—

Interjection: Walk the walk.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: To walk the walk when it needs to be walked.

I'm just going to make a couple of comments because I don't have a lot of time. I really wish I had more time.

To my good friend from Rainy River, I'm not sure what bubble he's been in when he says, "We're playing first and second and first and second." I think if he paid a little bit more attention to this industry, he'd know that this government came forward. I happened to be parliamentary assistant to then-Minister Dombrowsky when we listened and also came forward with a plan which we believe works. We still believe it's going to work, and we were first.

"Don't worry. The feds are going to come on board." I haven't seen them, frankly. Do they need help? Yes, they need help.

I hear my good friend from Oxford talking about cuts. Well, some additional $1.8 billion that wasn't budgeted

for, but we put out the programs to help these folks—$1.8 billion more. You know what? It's not enough.

I remember when my good friend from Oxford was the minister and an agricultural office was closed in my hometown, but I will give him credit. I pleaded with him to keep some of those sectors while I was reeve of Brighton township, and I give the member credit for supporting me and helping me achieve that. We got that, but they closed the rest of the building. So I get somewhat frustrated.

He talks about the allocation of budgets. Well, any crisis funding—and I'm going to call this crisis funding—that comes forward under any other ministry is never budgeted. So $1.8 billion of extra funding that was never budgeted—you know, we helped out the sector.

I repeat: Yes, it's not enough. We need to do more. We're prepared. This morning the minister, as we met with the cattlemen sector, committed that when she goes to the fed meeting in a week's time or within a few days, she's going to bring that message. She is going to go even a step further. She mentioned this morning that she was going to scan among her other ministers, her colleagues across Canada, to see if they can really turn the pressure on the federal government.

My good friend here from Guelph read some of the comments of the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Bette Jean Crews, who happens to be a constituent of mine and has had my ear more than once, which is good because she keeps me in tune.

We're here. We want to help. But for them to take this initiative to take their federal cousins off the hook—I cannot go for that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: It's a privilege to speak today about Ontario agriculture and our farm families, to whom we owe so much, for they labour to feed us. We thank them for that, but we also appreciate their presence in so many of our communities, and the presence of the OCA here today.

So it follows that this government owes it to them to pay attention to the challenges they face so as to ensure the viability of agriculture for generations to come. Unfortunately, under this government their challenges have for many families become nothing short of a crisis, and this government is paying far, far too little attention.

I want to quote from a June 1 letter which all members of this House should have received:

"The economic situation facing Ontario farmers is dire, but numbers released by Statistics Canada this past week show a continuing decline and a situation that is even more serious than we had anticipated.

"The future of food and farming in Ontario, without risk management programming, is clearly very bleak."

Those are very strong words coming from our farm leaders, who have come together to form the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition, including the OFA and the Christian Farmers.

Of course, the McGuinty government should have known the magnitude of the crisis facing farmers in Ontario. Last December, I wrote to the Premier to call his attention to insufficient safety net programs, a risk management program that must be fixed and extended, poor weather and growing conditions, escalating input costs and excessive government regulation. In that letter I asked the Premier if he would follow the advice of the OFA and the OASC to make new strategic investments in this vital industry and engage in developing a national food strategy.

More than five months later, the McGuinty government had failed to take such meaningful action, and so on May 17 I wrote to the Premier again. In that letter, I pointed out that this year, the McGuinty government will receive almost $1 billion in equalization payments from the federal government—for we are now a have-not province under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty—yet the McGuinty government continues to insist that it can't do anything about the consensus proposal on risk management because the federal government won't help. It's a pathetic excuse, especially in light of the Liberals' massive day care expenditures, which they went out of their way to hype in their budget speech as their initiative, taken without federal help.

Not acting on the crisis in agriculture is, in fact, the McGuinty government's deliberate choice. It was the former Chancellor of the Exchequer in Britain, Nigel Lawson, who coined the phrase, "to govern is to choose." Farm families, it would seem, are not this government's choice here in Ontario.

I want to offer this government another constructive suggestion that would help farm families. Many agribusinesses have fixed cooling requirements mandated by regulation or legislation. Milk, for example, must be kept cool. This requires electricity. But this makes adapting to peak energy prices difficult, if not impossible, for agribusinesses to simply absorb. Exempting peak energy expenses for agribusiness would go a long way to solving some of their cost pressures. Fruit and vegetable growers also need a break on hydro costs because their produce must be promptly refrigerated to ensure freshness and to conform to food safety guidelines. The Minister of Agriculture should consult and examine the options to help; perhaps a rebate program would be the answer.

My friend Jeff Wilson, who with his wife, Sharon, owns Birkbank Farms near Orton in the town of Erin, always offers me good advice. He tells me that fruit and vegetable growers need support from the province. The cost of this government's minimum wage increases comes right off the farmer's bottom line, and the farmer, in many cases, has little choice but to hire fewer workers and give them fewer hours.

To conclude, I want to thank my colleague Jim Wilson for this resolution, which I obviously wholeheartedly support. But the people who deserve our support most of all are the farm families of Ontario, and I call on all members not to let them down this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: I too want to join with my colleagues on this side of the House to call for support of the member for Simcoe-Grey's private member's resolution. I think it's very important. I know that the member for Wellington–Halton Hills just quoted from a letter where the eight groups, as part of the coalition, have supported it. I want to also read into the record one of the last lines in the letter: "We need to act now so that all Ontarians can enjoy the benefits of a healthy and vital agri-food industry today and for future generations."

I'm a new member in this Legislature. Less than a week into my by-election, we had an all-candidates meeting that the federation of agriculture sponsored. I talked to farmers about this item that evening. I can't, as a new member, understand why the minister and the parliamentary assistant aren't here today, because this is such an important aspect for us to discuss.

I think, as well, that the member for Wellington–Halton Hills brought up a wonderful point about this government going forward with their day care legislation in the absence of federal funding. They could very easily do this today.

The other thing I want to do, just to close: Again, I support this resolution 100%. These members across the way just stood out in line for some cattlemen's beef, and it was wonderful cattlemen's beef. I think they need to also stand up this afternoon. They need to stand in line, just like we're going to, and support the member for Simcoe–Grey.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm here also to support the member from Simcoe–Grey and in a broader sense, support agriculture, Ontario's second-largest industry, with respect to the cattlemen here today, who have literally fed almost all the members here, and the farmers who feed Ontario every day. That's what this is really about. It's about making sure that a viable industry in Ontario is not at risk.

In my riding of Durham, agriculture is the second-largest industry—some would say, the first industry now that the auto industry has moved backward a bit.

1520

I want to thank the cattlemen, who have an annual meeting each year that is well attended and well respected. Dave Davidson is always a spokesman; Stan Found, Lawrence McLaughlin, Scott Nesbitt and Scott Swain, a couple of the young agricultural leaders who are always available to help me understand the complex issues in support of this whole risk management strategy. The leadership in agriculture in Durham is renowned: Don Rickard, past chair of the Royal Winter Fair; and Kurt Kemp has just opened Algoma Orchards, along with Mike Gibson. I look at the Frew family and I look at the DeJong family, Mountjoy, Hubert Schillings, Charles Stevens. All of them and all the commodities in the diversity of agriculture in Ontario are right in our ridings, right in the GTA.

This bill needs to be supported.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Simcoe–Grey has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank my colleague from Kenora–Rainy River and colleagues on this side of the House: the members for Oxford, Wellington–Halton Hills, Leeds–Grenville and Durham.

To the member for Guelph and the Liberal member from Northumberland–Quinte West, Mrs. Sandals and Mr. Rinaldi: I'm really disappointed. No matter how you word a resolution, I suppose you can always find some weasel words to figure out how not to support it, but the fact of the matter is, there are 57,000 farm families. It's not Jim Wilson you're hurting today—I don't live on a farm, although I come from a farm background; it's 57,000 farm families and they are really hurting. You have to know that, Lou, when you go home and you see these people.

The reason I brought this forward—this is the worst it has been in terms of a farm crisis, across the board, across all agriculture, and we see that in the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition. For the first time that I've ever heard of, all of the major groups are coming together, and they're trying as best they can to be polite to you, to be nice to you. They fed us all again today; they took lovely pictures of the Premier—the cattlemen's association, who are here today—and lovely pictures of the minister. They're trying to be as nice as possible, but they're starting to be on the verge of starving, and many have already gone bankrupt.

I drive through my riding, and where there were famous pork producers and beef producers, there's land for rent and houses for rent. That's how bad it is. And it's across the board this time. It is not just one commodity or another, as I mentioned in my remarks. From time to time we've had problems over the years with commodities.

You did a good job with the grain and oilseeds pilot project. Why did you take the $144 million out?

At the same time, you go out to these people, the farmers, every day, and you're not telling them the whole story. You keep saying, "If tomorrow the feds came in, we've got the money." You don't have the money, and we're doing the best we can today to prod you along to at least do something for the farmers and stop using the federal government as an excuse.

TAXATION

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: It is my pleasure to speak to the Legislature today and to begin by reading the motion that I am bringing forward for the consideration of the Legislature: That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario, working with the political confederacy of the Chiefs of Ontario, should press the government of Canada to acknowledge and implement in the HST, the same First Nations point-of-sale tax exemption currently provided under the RST.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Carroll has moved private member's notice of motion

number 32. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: Our government strongly supports the First Nations in their call to maintain the point-of-sale exemption. But, as the motion reads, we need the government of Canada, the federal government, to come to the table.

Just to give the background of this motion and some context, let me just review that to remind the parties and all of us here that under the GST rules, no tax is payable if goods are acquired by a status First Nations member, band or council:

—on a reserve;

—off a reserve, delivered by a business or its agent to a reserve;

—off a reserve at a qualifying remote store by a reserve agent.

Since 1980, the province of Ontario has provided a point-of-sale exemption for Ontario retail sales tax to status First Nations members, bands or councils who acquire and self-deliver to a reserve for consumption on the reserve. This administrative practice has been supported by all three parties while in government. Minister Wilkinson, as Minister of Revenue, and Minister Bentley, as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, are in strong support of this action and have been working diligently in their discussions with the federal government to bring about the required outcome.

Since the HST will operate following those GST rules, there will no longer be a point-of-sale exemption for self-delivered goods unless the federal government agrees to administer this exemption. First Nations in Ontario would like this exemption to remain. The government of Ontario agrees very much that it remain.

To continue, may I just say that I am bringing forward this motion today because we strongly support the continuation of the current point-of-sale rebate, and we will continue to press the federal Minister of Finance, Mr. Flaherty, to sit down and have a meaningful conversation with the First Nations and the government of Ontario.

As we are all aware, the federal government has final authority on the administration of the HST. They are currently indicating that they are not agreeable to continuing Ontario's point-of-sale exemption under the HST.

First Nations and the government of Ontario are working together in our joint efforts to bring the federal government to the table. This motion today calls on the Ontario Legislative Assembly to support that call to bring the federal government to the table. Together we can find opportunities—all parties, all members in this House—to communicate with the federal government, and together we will be in a stronger position to influence them.

As is known, a memorandum of agreement was signed between the political confederacy, represented by Ontario Regional Chief Toulouse, and the government of Ontario, as represented by Minister Wilkinson, on May 3 of this year. The MOA is a very positive step toward ensuring the continuation of the current administration of the point-of-sale exemption. The memorandum of agreement also shows that Ontario is standing shoulder to shoulder with the First Nations to press the federal government to accept this point-of-sale exemption. On May 27, the Chiefs of Ontario ratified this memorandum of agreement with the government of Ontario.

Recent media reports have indicated that Minister Flaherty has made contact with First Nations and has indicated that he will meet with First Nations and Ontario. This is indeed encouraging.

First Nations and the Ontario government need to continue to work together to address the concerns that have been raised by the federal government relating to data and accounting requirements necessary for the administration of the HST.

In the very recent past, just to recount, Ontario entered into discussions with the First Nations leadership. Just to take us back, we did this immediately after passing the budget in March 2009, and we did so to bring the matter forward, to be very clear in our intentions to continue this relationship, this agreement, this administrative procedure, with First Nations in Ontario. We did so to make sure that people understood the impact of moving forward with this or not.

1530

The Premier wrote to the Prime Minister in support of the exemption, asking that federal ministers sit down and have meaningful discussions with First Nations and Ontario. In addition to pressing the federal government to continue our current point-of-sale exemption through the memorandum of agreement, the Ministry of Revenue and aboriginal affairs, and Ministers Wilkinson and Bentley and their teams and departments will continue to work together with the First Nations leadership to develop proposals to help address the concerns of First Nations.

I'm comforted, indeed, by the fact that all members of the Legislature are in agreement with the course of action, as they also support the principle of First Nations' point-of-sale tax exemption. All parties that have formed government in this province, in this Legislature, have had this as part of their policy, have implemented and carried on this tradition with the aboriginal people, with the First Nations of Ontario, during their term of office.

Although I listened carefully to the member from the third party who was addressing another matter and using the expression, "They say, 'They'll do it,'" meaning the federal government, and then the Ontario government says, "You go first, then we'll go," I don't think one can at all draw an analogy even in his mind of what we're bringing forward and asking for today.

We have absolutely put our cards on the table. We have made very clear in our discussions with the First Nations, in the memorandum of agreement, and in all that has been done in the past and since the 2009 budget, and we couldn't be clearer in our discussions with Minister Flaherty and the federal government of what exactly the outcome of these negotiations must be.

Exemptions have been made; that's well known. This is an exemption that must also be made. There can be no

exception here. We are very firm in our commitment, and we continue to act in the best of faith with the aboriginal peoples with whom we have been in constant communication and constant discussion.

We have many ways, as politicians and elected representatives, to convey what we believe to be good policy. We do this in this Legislature. We do it when we meet with the federal government. But we also meet in a number of quiet venues, and I would ask that all members of the House who have those opportunities convey in those quiet places what a very, very high priority it is that we accomplish this exemption and that we are able to move forward on all aspects of the point-of-sale exemption.

I know there are other members of the House who wish to address this matter. I realize I am going a little bit short of my time, but I understand here that that is often appreciated by other colleagues. So rather than be redundant, let me just close by saying that I am very honoured to bring forward this motion today. I see it as a very vital one, and I think we need to all work together, as we have been doing to date, and stay very strong vis-à-vis the federal government in demanding that this exemption be made.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm certainly pleased to speak to ballot item number 27 put forward by the member from Barrie, "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario, working with the political confederacy of the Chiefs of Ontario, should press the government of Canada to acknowledge and implement in the HST, the same First Nations point-of-sale tax exemption currently provided under the RST."

But I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, that it has to be quite embarrassing for the government to have not taken this issue into consideration. There was absolutely no reason whatsoever that Premier Dalton McGuinty could not have made this First Nations point-of-sale tax exemption a requirement in the MOA and the CITCA with the federal government.

It's another example of them hastily putting forward this new taxation of the HST, which will add 8% cost on every day households for all families throughout the province of Ontario and have a dire impact on seniors, yet on this particular issue they were negligent. I think it's also an admission on the part of the Liberal McGuinty government that the HST will negatively impact a major demographic in the province of Ontario. We've been telling them this now for months and months. It's going to hurt a lot of people.

The other thing the government should have done is negotiated with the First Nations at the time when they were negotiating the MOA and the CITCA, but they neglected to do so. Because of their own omission, their own neglect, their own lack of thorough consideration of the impact of the new tax, which will be with us now on July 1, they're trying to shift the blame in this private member's bill to the federal government when it has itself a responsibility to the First Nations people of Ontario.

In fact, I have a quote here from Chief Angus Toulouse to the committee on finance December 3, 2009, where he says, "Ontario blames the federal government for the failure to address our rights and interests, but the chiefs do not accept that Ontario can simply shift the blame to the federal government. Ontario has its own relationship and its own responsibilities with First Nations in Ontario, and can and must do more. The duty owed by Ontario to First Nations is specific in this case, and the federal government has no authority to force Ontario to ignore and set aside the exemption."

I think the private member's bill before us today is a glaring indication of the fact that this government, when it came to the introduction and the implementation of the HST, has again not done due diligence. They did not consider all of the stakeholders in the province of Ontario and as a result, it has to be embarrassing that we now have today this discussion on this private member's bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important motion. I want to commend the member from Barrie for bringing this motion forward.

I support this motion and I support the fact that we have to extend point-of-sale exemption to our First Nations in the province of Ontario, a tradition we've had for some time. The government of Ontario, under the RST, the retail sales tax, which we now refer to as the provincial sales tax, had that type of point-of-sale exemption for our First Nations. We need to work with the federal government and we have to insist that the federal government create that point-of-sale exemption from the HST in their federal rules and regulations where the HST will lie.

I think we know why the government has introduced the notion of harmonizing GST and PST: 2009 was a devastating year. When we look at it globally in terms of the recession we lived through, it was a year where we saw economies contracting across the world, and of course Canada and Ontario were not immune to that decline in growth. It was imperative that the government ensure that we bring forward economic policies that will help grow the province of Ontario, that will help grow this economy. After all, as the largest province in the country, we are the engine of the economy for Canada.

We've already started to see the impact of the changes we have brought. Ontario is leading Canada in terms of economic growth and Canada is leading the world in terms of economic growth, and that correlation is very clear.

1540

Harmonizing the GST and the PST is not the only thing the government has brought as part of its tax reform package. Cutting income tax rates for 93% of Ontarians is another very significant piece of the policy that the government has put forward. That tax cut actually came

into effect on January 1, 2010, a good five or so months ago. It will impact most of our Ontario population, including members of First Nations who live in Ontario—not to mention the third aspect of the tax reform package, which is to cut corporate tax rates, especially for small businesses, which are the engine of our economy both in large cities and in small towns, villages and hamlets across the province.

What we need to, of course, now work towards—which is the focus of this particular motion brought by my friend from Barrie—is ensuring that the point-of-sale exemption exists on the HST for our First Nations. The way the GST rules are—and the member from Barrie talked about it a little bit—is that under the GST rules, members of First Nations who live on-reserve do not pay any sales tax. If they purchase something off-reserve and if that particular product is being delivered on-reserve, they do not pay any GST. They are GST-exempt. If they purchase something off-reserve and they are taking the delivery themselves, then they pay GST, but once that product is brought on-reserve they apply for a rebate and they get that GST back.

For PST, or RST, right now there is a blanket point-of-sale exemption, so it doesn't matter where the product is being used; on-reserve or off-reserve, members of First Nations do not pay the 8% PST.

Once the HST comes into effect on July 1, essentially what will happen is that the GST rules will become HST rules, which means that once again, if a member of a First Nation who lives on-reserve buys a product off-reserve and that product is being delivered directly on-reserve, they do not pay the 13% HST. However, if they take the delivery off-reserve by themselves and bring it on-reserve to use that particular good on-reserve, then they can apply for that HST rebate.

We are saying that that rule is fine for the GST if that's how the federal government has chosen to apply that particular rule, but the exemption from the 8% of the HST portion at the point of sale, just like how it operated under the RST, should stay in place. That is why the memorandum of agreement was reached with the political confederacy and signed by Regional Chief Toulouse, the Minister of Revenue, John Wilkinson, and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Chris Bentley, to ensure that we work together to insist that the federal government extend the HST point-of-sale exemptions for our First Nations, just the way it exists as it relates to the retail sales tax or the PST.

We're confident that by working together, we can extend that point-of-sale exemption. I think there is some willingness on the part of the federal government to consider that, to look at that. It is extremely important that we work along with members of our First Nations and, I think, extremely important that we, as the members of this Legislature, speak united and express our resolve to work together to ensure that this very important exemption exists for our First Nations, as they are an extremely vibrant part of our economy. It's extremely important that we have that point-of-sale exemption put in place.

I will stop at this moment because I know that my friend from Toronto Centre would also like to speak on this particular issue. Thank you very much for your indulgence.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate.

Mr. John O'Toole: I also want to thank the member from Barrie, a former federal minister, I believe, in the Chrétien government. She replaced Joe Tascona, who was a good friend—he used to sit beside me—and is running for mayor, I understand, in the city of Barrie.

That being said, our member from Kitchener–Waterloo, Ms. Witmer, mentioned in her remarks the oversight, deliberate or otherwise, by the negotiators of the original agreement with the federal government. The problem I have with this is, it's almost like the previous discussion with Mr. Wilson about who goes first, the "gotcha." You know what I mean?

Quite honestly, they're making a concerted effort here. Obviously, when you had Chief Toulouse sign the May agreement with Wilkinson and Bentley, the two ministers from the provincial government, they had already realized it was a problem—this point-of-sale exemption that's required for First Nations.

You recounted the history here from 1980. It was not always the case in Ontario, but it was in 1980 until the present time.

Did they just notice it? Not to be cynical, but was it an oversight, deliberate or otherwise, in these rushed negotiations on the HST?

The HST is a very unpleasant new tax, a 13% combined tax, and it's very controversial. The business community probably likes it for good reasons, but there are other communities that are disadvantaged, one of them being the First Nations, who are losing the point-of-sale exemption which is a privilege they had. It should have been respected.

Am I to assume the agreement that was signed earlier on in 2009 by Minister Flaherty and Minister Duncan—I have a copy of that agreement. There's no mention of the point-of-sale exemption. However, after that, they did provide a point-of-sale exemption for the $4 cup of coffee for Tim Hortons. They did go back and say that anything under $4—the sandwich, the doughnut and the coffee—was going to be exempt.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: The double-double.

Mr. John O'Toole: Yes, for the double-double. So why did they not force—and the question has been raised.

We, in substance, agree that privileges should not be taken away without serious negotiations—and they were taken away. With a stroke of the pen by the government, Mr. McGuinty's government eliminated a privilege that was in place and did not regard it. It's not the first time.

The evidence, to me—if I look at the changes to the Mining Act that were passed in October 2009, Bill 173, there were other oversights in those negotiations on the Mining Act. These mineral rights with First Nations are the very top issue. If you dig deep enough, these disputes

on land claims are all about the royalties. It's about current payment for all of the resources. Whether it's wood, gold or diamonds, it's about the royalties. They own the land anyway. We own it in common. We share the world.

More recently, Bill 191, which passed earlier today, is another example. It's the northern planning act, another case where they have exempted First Nations' autonomy in planning in the north, which primarily is inhabited by people of First Nations.

It troubles me that when it's convenient, Ms. Carroll brings a resolution forward, notice of motion 32, which we're debating—and it's a worthy, worthy issue—taking someone's rights away and then trying to replace them surreptitiously and blaming the federal government for not doing it.

The federal government gave you $4.5 billion to raise taxes, and now you can blame the federal government in the future for all tax increases—because the tax collector, constitutionally, was the province. In the Constitution, the province gets taxing authority for certain types of things and municipalities don't have—other than property tax—the authority, but that's granted under the Municipal Act.

Getting on track here, I'm finding out that there's a whole series of disadvantaged people in this HST. They've acknowledged, with the transfer of $4.5 billion from the federal government, that there is a bump in the road coming to people on July 1. It's going to cost you more on July 2 to go to Canada's Wonderland, more for gas for the car and tickets for the entry and the food you consume. Everything you have there for entertainment is going to cost more, or if you're going to Stratford or Niagara-on-the-Lake this summer. I would say everything is going to cost more. Registering my children in camps, soccer, basketball, football or whatever is going to cost more. Seniors on fixed incomes are going to be disadvantaged. The First Nations are disadvantaged. They've admitted that. They signed it. They are culpable and responsible, period, end of debate.

1550

Let's admit there's an error. If you stand and tell me in your summation that you apologize and have made an error—not you personally, Ms. Carroll, but your government made an error. I can tell you now that I believe—I know Minister Flaherty, a kind person and a person of principle and substance. I would say, if there are negotiations, he will do the fair thing.

As part of the bigger picture of untangling all these land disputes and unsettled resolves, the First Nations issues aren't simple issues. These are rights, rights of land ownership, land title, who can hold title. These are complex issues. Let's not trivialize them with this oversight and error by the McGuinty government in the signing of the HST agreement with the federal government.

The point-of-sale exemption is removing a privilege that was once enjoyed by agreement of this House in a vote in 1980. That was removed by a stroke of a pen by Dwight Duncan and Premier McGuinty. You can't hold Minister Flaherty or Steven Harper responsible for it. Yet the tone of the debate today is to flip it over the fence and blame the federal government.

It's like everything they do, even earlier in Mr. Wilson's debate: Blame the federal government, the 60-40 split in agricultural support programs: "Where's the federal money?" Show some leadership. Show some courage. You will find us, when it comes down to ethical principles, to be supportive of doing the right thing.

This is a clear example of an error, an oversight—innocently; I don't blame malicious intent. But there is always the argument that should be made: The duty to consult is a legal term. Mr. Bentley, who signed that, knows the importance of that term. The duty to consult implies that the laws we change—you said it in the 173 act, you said it in Bill 191 and you said it in Bill 16 when you implemented the duty to consult. You will not always get agreement, but when you operate on first principles of respect, respect for the law, you can always come to consensus that the right thing was done.

I want to hear the summations, and I look—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I had the pleasure to speak in support of a number of opposition bills today. I did that because I think they were the right thing to do, and I am very pleased to do that. I guess we urban white folks have the ability to have very academic conversations about that. I spoke earlier to the northern act.

The thing that's troubling to me is the conditions for First Nations and for First Nations children; that's one of the reasons I ran to be in this House. It was one of the reasons that brought me here. As I've said, there were four things that I wanted to do in my tenure in this House, and this is one of them. I arguably represent more First Nations and aboriginal folks than most others. Most people who are First Nations who have a health crisis end up in my constituency.

I take some issue with my friend from Durham. No one is blaming anyone here. I didn't hear Madam Carroll blame the federal government. I didn't hear the member from Ottawa Centre blame the federal government. You won't hear me blame the federal government.

Mr. Michael Prue: That's because you're like this.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I don't think this is a joking matter.

If I leave here in 10 years, and we still have the kind of child poverty rates, the suicide and death rates amongst First Nations children in this province, we should all be ashamed. This isn't going to solve it, and I don't have time for blame games.

I worked as an adviser when I chaired the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy to both the present Conservative government and the last Liberal government. I have an eagle feather, and I am ashamed as a Canadian about the conditions of First Nations. I don't have the luxury of blame games.

I have also heard from my federal cousins, Minister Baird and others, Minister Prentice, that we were going

to put aside these silly discussions, and we were not going to diminish the rights of First Nations. Our party is simply saying it would be very, very helpful if we didn't get into blame games because, my God, you can look at any party in this House that has been in power anywhere in this country and none has met the full measure of the needs of First Nations people. None of us, who all live in glass houses, should be throwing stones.

The least we could do is have the humility to get out of this. I don't expect Conservatives, New Democrats or Liberals to apologize for their record on First Nations. What I would like to see is some maturity and all of us rise in this House and get the point-of-sale back. My understanding is that Minister Flaherty is a very honourable gentleman and a very good finance minister and someone who is committed to this. We know that our Premier and our Minister of Finance are committed to this. Ms. Carroll, who brings the unique experience of having a stellar career in both provincial and federal politics—we're very blessed to have her in our caucus—understands this and has seen this from both sides, and probably better than most of us understands the frustration of trying to get provinces, First Nations and the federal government aligned.

It takes a bit of humility here. I don't understand how you can't stand and vote for this today. It would be much more powerful if this wasn't a partisan issue, if all of us as Ontarians simply stood in our place, stood with our federal cousins and said we all believe this should happen. We're not trying to put Mr. Flaherty or Prime Minister Harper's back against the wall. My understanding is this is more of an invitation, quite frankly, because Chief Toulouse has signed this MOA to try to get them and us together.

We have been generously endowed by the federal government with transitional funding to buffer the losses that we will take on the HST, and there has been some goodwill there that I think has been expressed by the federal government. We are not administering our sales tax in this province. We have given up that right and responsibility. It is now going to be administered by Revenue Canada. The point-of-sale, the distribution and the administration of this may have complexities that we are not entirely aware of in this Legislature, and the discussion is important. My sense is that the goodwill is there. I think if this is perceived not to be a partisan issue, then we can all stand in our place and say that this resolution, which has no provocative language that I can see in it at all, is simply saying, "Let's get to the table," and is there a willingness beyond this? I think this will happen.

The notes I've got in front of me say that our government is trying to find a way to do this even if the federal government doesn't come to the table, but it is darn hard because we're not administering the HST. It would be much easier, much more efficient if we could do this.

The only people I'm going to apologize to today are the First Nations of this country because I never think that we've done them the kinds of service that we should and this could be a small beginning in the right direction. I don't think anyone can take any greater credit or deserves any greater blame than the others. Let's just get on with it and deal with this administrative matter. Get the point-of-sales tax exemption back, meet the needs of First Nations people, show them some respect and move forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm glad to get an opportunity to get a few minutes on this particular motion. I just want the people who are tuning in to understand what it is that we're debating, along with our guests who are here in the gallery, because they're wondering, "What is this all about?" It's real simple: The government of Ontario has decided that they want to blend the two sales taxes together. There is a federal GST that is administered by the federal government, and the province of Ontario has what we call the PST, the provincial sales tax.

The McGuinty government has decided they want to blend those two taxes together so that the federal government collects one tax rather than two, but the net effect is that you'll be paying more tax because many services and goods that were not covered under the PST—that were exempt—are now going to be taxed because we're going to follow the GST rules. So that's what this debate is about, but the ancillary part of the debate is, how does it affect our First Nations?

In Ontario, when Ontario ran its own PST system, as we do now, if you're a First Nations member and you show up in a store somewhere in Ontario and you have a status card, you get what's called a point-of-sale exemption. You walk into the store and you buy a pen, you buy a car, you buy whatever it might be, and if you have a status card you get a point-of-sale exemption. Then it's up to the Ministry of Finance and the vendor to ensure that in fact that particular good that is being bought is actually going on-reserve.

That's what this is all about. This is about the point-of-sale exemption. The problem is, the McGuinty government, in its haste to make a deal to blend the HST with the PST, to bring it all together, forgot to make sure that we protected the interests of First Nations. I take offence at somebody who stands in this House and says, "Let's not play the blame game on this particular issue," because that's what this debate is all about. This is about a provincial government that says, "It's not my fault. It's the federal government rules that govern this issue. There's nothing I could have done when I negotiated with the federal government; I'm absolved of any responsibility. It's Flaherty's fault." That's effectively what this debate is all about.

1600

So it's pretty rich when we have members of this House stand up and say, "I stand for First Nations and I think this is all about the blame game." This whole debate is about the blame game. This whole mess is about the blame game. If this provincial government under Dalton McGuinty believes that there should be a

new relationship with First Nations, as I do, as Andrea Horwath does, as Michael Prue and my colleagues do, then it was up to this provincial government to say at the beginning of the negotiations, "By the way, there is a point-of-sale exemption in the province of Ontario and we want to ensure that that point-of-sale exemption is maintained once we blend the two taxes together into the HST."

I know that Madame Elliott knows what Mr. Flaherty would have done. She knows him well and I know him well, because I served in this House with Mr. Flaherty for years. If he wanted to have the blended HST badly enough, he would have said, "Okay Ontario, let's sit down and talk about this and let's come to some kind of an agreement." I know Mr. Flaherty not to be an unreasonable person, but the provincial government didn't put this on the table; that's the problem. They found out that they had a problem when First Nations finally clued in to, "Hold it a second. HST? Does that mean to say that we've got a deal like with the GST? Does that mean to say that we lose our point-of-sale exemption?" They started raising questions with the government and raising questions with me, as the critic, and other members of the opposition. We confirmed, in fact, that what it meant was that the failure of the McGuinty government to negotiate the exemption in the first place put us in this situation.

So once the negotiations were over, the provincial government said, "Well, the easy way to do this is the blame game." "Let's play the blame game," says Mr. McGuinty. "Let's point our finger to the federal government and say it's all their fault. Let's work with you, First Nations, we love you," says the McGuinty government. "Come close so I can hug you and love you and tell you the things that I want to tell you, whisper in your ear how much I love you and I want a new relationship, but it's all the federal government's fault." That's effectively what this is all about.

Are we going to vote for this motion? Absolutely. Why wouldn't we? I would imagine that the Conservatives are going to vote for it. Because we believe there should be a point-of-sale exemption, and if this is a mechanism by which you get a point-of-sale exemption, so be it. But the point is, this is all about the blame game. This is about the McGuinty government that did not do its job at the beginning.

Listen, my friends, if you're out negotiating the sale of your house and you want to have a condition in the offer of purchase—either in the sale or the purchase—do you not put it in at the beginning? Do you not instruct your real estate agent and say, "By the way, I'm buying my neighbour's house," or "I'm buying this house that I want to buy and my condition of purchase is that I want the water softener to come with it," or "I want the curtains left on the wall," or whatever it might be? You don't go out and buy a house, not put conditions on the offer of purchase, and then once the deal is over say, "Oh, by the way, I forgot to say that I wanted the curtains, so I want them for free," because I can tell you what I would do as the person selling. I'd say, "Well, it was up to you to put it in the offer of purchase." It's the same thing when it comes to this particular issue. Where was the McGuinty government at the very beginning when they negotiated the HST merger with the PST?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They forgot.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They forgot, that's exactly what happened. Which brings me to the point: What about this new relationship we're going to have with First Nations? Does anybody in this House—I want to first of all start with my caucus—does anybody in my caucus not believe there should be a new relationship? Absolutely not. We think there needs to be a new relationship. I think that the Conservatives would want a new relationship. I certainly know that First Nations want a new relationship. But you put yourself in the shoes of First Nations and tell me how this relationship feels any newer than any other colonial attitude that we've had in the past, because this is what this is: colonialism at its best.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Absolutely, my friend. Colonialism at its best. We're going to fix this by going to the federal government. If we really believe as a Legislature that First Nations should have been exempted, and if the government believes that's the case, it should have been done at the beginning. That's the point that I want to make here.

So the government better not come in here and continue this, "Oh, it's all Mr. Flaherty's fault. Oh my Lord, it's bad old Stephen Harper. It's all those ghosts in Ottawa. You've got to work with the federal government." My God. Aren't you the government of Ontario? Isn't the Premier the Premier of this province? Don't we have a cabinet? Don't you have a majority in this House? Aren't you the ones negotiating the deal in the first place? What kind of negotiators are you if you can't put in a point-of-sale exemption in an HST agreement with the federal government? It begs the question: Why, then, are you the government? It's a really simple premise.

So I say to my friends across the way, don't try to pretend this is anything other than what you've been doing on this particular issue right from the start.

I do want to commend the member for putting this forward. Is it a bad thing? Absolutely not. Is it a step forward? Absolutely. But I don't want anybody to think, in any way, shape or form, that somehow because we, as New Democrats—and I can't speak for the Conservatives, but I imagine they feel as I do—that by voting for this, we think that somehow or other it's the federal government's fault.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Who said it was the federal government's fault?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I'm glad to give you another five minutes on the clock and we'll redebate this issue. But the point is, you're the ones who negotiated it. As I said, when you're going out to do an offer of purchase, it's up to you to put that information in in the first place.

I also want to say, in regards to the new relationship, that there's an increasing frustration within the First Nations community of this province, and it's not just

around the HST. We know, and we're going to see, come July 1, all kinds of blockades around this province as a result of First Nations' protests towards the HST.

Mr. Michael Prue: They are going to.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They are going to. I don't condone it.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, no. Understand what I'm saying, Minister of Revenue. I'm not condoning it. That's not my point. My point is, we are seeing an increased amount of frustration on the part of First Nations with this issue, and what I think has been really a bit of a travesty is the government's attempt to try to push this off as the federal government's fault. The provincial government should be straight with First Nations and say, "We made a mistake. We either did not negotiate strong enough or we completely forgot to put this exemption in. We accept our responsibility as a province and we will work with you to get the exemption." You could make it a condition of the HST being implemented in this province.

From the perspective of the First Nations, they are hopeful. We are so fortunate in this province that the First Nations people are infinitely more wise and infinitely more patient than we are, because if you look at what's been happening in those communities for many years, there's always somebody who comes along and says, "You know, there's going to be a new relationship and we'll do things better." But as we continue to look at the conditions in our First Nations, they are no better today than they were many years ago.

I've been a member of this assembly for 20 years, and I've got to tell you, it's been pretty slow progress in First Nations. We're still living in houses with 20 and 25 people. We're still living in houses that have mould in them. We still have schools that we're sending our kids to that have mould in them and that are inadequate and unfit for children to learn in. We have hardly any kind of infrastructure to communities when it comes to roads and pavement. We have boil-water advisories in the majority of the communities across Ontario in First Nations. And what do we do in this province? Bad old Jim Flaherty, it's all his fault; bad old Mr. Harper, it's all his fault. Well, you know, the last—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I hear the government say, "Now you're learning." See, they're confirming my point. Are they not residents of the province of Ontario? Do they not have the ability to benefit from what this province has to offer?

I say to my friends across the way, if you're serious about having a new relationship, you've sure got a funny way of showing it. We should start where we can in order to try to do what is necessary to advance the situation in First Nations communities and for First Nations generally so that they can have a better life into the future.

I end on this note: Today, the subcommittee met on Bill 191. The government wants to apparently have some hearings up in the Far North in regards to this particular bill and the Far North planning act. So what do they say? "We're going to be up there in two weeks. We're coming. We're going to be there for a week, and everybody get ready. We're coming."

NAN is meeting next week. They're all out of the communities, along with the elders, along with the land use planning people. The following week, Mushkegowuk Tribal Council is at their tribal council annual meeting. There are graduations going on in those communities, where there's hardly a place to have a graduation because the only place the committee can do a hearing is a school, where there happens to be a graduation ceremony taking place. The government was not even willing to amend the time allocation motion to give the committee the ability to say to First Nations, "Tell us when you want us to come and we will be there."

All we asked for: Let's give the First Nations the credit they deserve and the respect that they should get from this assembly, to allow the First Nations to say to us, "Come on this particular week, sometime between now and September, and we'll tell you which communities we want you to come to in that week and, in partnership with you, we will tell you what we think about the Far North Planning Act." Instead, what do we get? Not a new relationship; it's a continuation of the same colonialism at its worst.

1610

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member has two minutes to respond.

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: I think we need to recall that what we in this House hold in common is our commitment to ensure that the First Nations in Ontario maintain the same point-of-sale exemption in the HST that is currently provided within the PST. We share that commitment. We're also all joined in our desire to achieve the same outcome: the preservation of this exemption.

As my colleague from Toronto Centre emphasized, this motion is not about promoting an abrasive, partisan launch against the federal government. It is instead asking this Legislature to pass this motion, thereby sending the message to the federal government that their action is imperative, that we need them to do the right thing and ensure that the same exemption within our PST is contained within the HST. Yes, federal-provincial relations can be of interesting occupation, and certainly we see a variety of dynamics. But in this case, we don't have a situation where the federal government is trying to work with all provinces and territories. Instead, we have a federal government who pushed Ontario to go in this direction and we see a government that had the wisdom to recognize that this is exactly what we need. Therefore, we're just asking those two governments to finish the task and to accomplish exactly what should be done for First Nations in Ontario.

It isn't in any way an attempt to poke anybody with a stick. We are merely asking all of us to say in this motion and vote in this motion for exactly what all of us are agreed upon.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT (ENABLING MUNICIPALITIES TO REQUIRE INCLUSIONARY HOUSING), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE (INCLUSION DE LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES PAR LES MUNICIPALITÉS)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): We will deal first with ballot item number 25, standing in name of Ms. DiNovo.

Ms. DiNovo has moved second reading of Bill 58, An Act to amend the Planning Act with respect to inclusionary housing. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I will call in the members after the other two resolutions.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): We will now deal with the second ballot item, number 26, standing in the name of Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson has moved private members' notice of motion number 33. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll deal with that after the next motion.

TAXATION

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): We will now deal with ballot item 27, standing in the same of Ms. Carroll.

Ms. Carroll has moved private members' notice of motion number 32. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1615 to 1620.

PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT (ENABLING MUNICIPALITIES TO REQUIRE INCLUSIONARY HOUSING), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE (INCLUSION DE LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES PAR LES MUNICIPALITÉS)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. DiNovo has moved second reading of Bill 58.

All those in favour will please rise.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hardeman, Ernie	Pendergast, Leeanna
Arnott, Ted	Jaczek, Helena	Prue, Michael
Balkissoon, Bas	Kormos, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq
Best, Margarett	Kular, Kuldip	Ramal, Khalil
Bisson, Gilles	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Mangat, Amrit	Sandals, Liz
Carroll, Aileen	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Clark, Steve	McMeekin, Ted	Tabuns, Peter
Delaney, Bob	Miller, Paul	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Moridi, Reza	Wilson, Jim
DiNovo, Cheri	Murray, Glen R.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Elliott, Christine	Naqvi, Yasir	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	O'Toole, John	

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those opposed?

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Dickson, Joe	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	McNeely, Phil	Smith, Monique

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 38; the nays are 6.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'd like the bill referred to the regulations and private bills committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Shall this bill be referred to the standing committee on private bills? Agreed? Agreed.

We'll open the door now for 30 seconds.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Wilson has moved private members' notice of motion number 33.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Kular, Kuldip	Ruprecht, Tony
Clark, Steve	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
DiNovo, Cheri	McMeekin, Ted	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Paul	
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those opposed will please rise.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Pendergast, Leeanna
Arthurs, Wayne	Jaczek, Helena	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Mangat, Amrit	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	McNeely, Phil	Smith, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Moridi, Reza	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Murray, Glen R.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	Naqvi, Yasir	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 16; the nays are 24.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Open the doors.

TAXATION

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Carroll has moved notice of motion number 32.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Pendergast, Leeanna
Arnott, Ted	Jaczek, Helena	Phillips, Gerry
Arthurs, Wayne	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Balkissoon, Bas	Kular, Kuldip	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramal, Khalil
Best, Margarett	Mangat, Amrit	Ruprecht, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	McMeekin, Ted	Sergio, Mario
Carroll, Aileen	McNeely, Phil	Smith, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Miller, Paul	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Moridi, Reza	Wilson, Jim
Dickson, Joe	Murray, Glen R.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
DiNovo, Cheri	Naqvi, Yasir	Zimmer, David
Elliott, Christine	O'Toole, John	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 41; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Phillips has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until September 13.

The House adjourned at 1628.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters
Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
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Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margarett R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
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Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

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Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craitor
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Amrit Mangat, Phil McNeely
John O'Toole
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Glen R Murray, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: David Orazietti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Bob Chiarelli, Steve Clark
Helena Jaczek, Kuldip Kular
Dave Levac, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Orazietti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, M. Aileen Carroll
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Leeanna Pendergast
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Reza Moridi
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Norm Miller
Yasir Naqvi, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
M. Aileen Carroll, France Gélinas
Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay
Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
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Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
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